HE AMERICAN TRADITION IN LITERATURE, By H. S. Canby

The Saturday Review of Literature

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"PILGRIM'S WAY—AN ESSAY IN RECOLLECTION"
By John Buchan, Lord Tweedsmuir
Reviewed by Oswald Garrison Villard

"FAITH FOR LIVING"
By Lewis Mumford
Reviewed by Irwin Edman

"THE FIRE AND THE WOOD"
By F. C. Hutchinson
Reviewed by George Dangerfield

"MAN AND SOCIETY IN AN AGE OF RECONSTRUCTION"
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Reviewed by John Dewey

"HERE LIES RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN"
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Reviewed by John Anderson

"SUCH WAS SARATOGA"
By Hugh Bradley
Reviewed by Fairfax Downey

"MOON TIDE"
By Willard Robertson
Reviewed by N. L. Rothman

JOHN BUCHAN "was obviously a man's man" . . . *(See page 5)*

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The American Tradition In Literature

HENRY SEIDEL CANBY

TOO much has perhaps been said of new departures in American literature. Like the New Deal, they are new in America only in so far as twentieth century man has encountered new problems and invented new ways of thinking about them. This nation has been incredibly urbanized by the factory, the automobile, the moving picture, and the radio. Racial minorities, with traditions other than Anglo-Saxon, have become articulate and given to American literature, not so much a new accent, as new materials upon which the imagination can work. Yet it is questionable whether American literature owes much that is distinctively American to these influences. Joyce has worked more powerfully in our fiction than the radio broadcaster; New York Jews, Minnesota Scandinavians, Mississippi Negroes, Boston Irish, when they begin to write, prove to be more American than foreign, sometimes, I think often, more American than the Anglo-Saxon strain. If we are to seek for a national character in American literature, giving it qualities not dependent upon its English backgrounds and the doctrines of the twentieth century, it must be in the American tradition. This is not a dead hand reaching from out of our past, but a force that is alive and, like all living things, growing and changing, while preserving a pattern that can be recognized and defined.

There have been many attempts to define the American tradition, but the best have been protests against some other definition, and have suffered from oversimplification. Turner's famous exposition of the frontier spirit was a correction of an overemphasis upon our European origins; Parrington's study of democracy in American literature was an attack upon the New England successors of the Federalists, who had been indifferent to democracy. The recent Marxian school has lit obscure corners of economic influence without supplying any formula broad enough for an Emerson, a Cooper, or a Whitman. In a brief paper like this one, I cannot hope to analyze, and much less to challenge, all these explanations of what it means to be an American. Yet it is possible to break down some of this conflicting testimony, and describe a group of traits that we can all agree are distinctively American, and then see how far they continue to live in the vivid, vigorous, if often disorderly, and sometimes noisy, literature of our own contemporaries in the twenties, thirties, and forties.

I SHALL not try to be original in this portrait of the American tradition, unless in a fresh application to books and people of our time. Probably the job could be done with different classifications, and certainly more classifications are possible. That is not important. If the traits I describe are true and significant, they are enough for an experiment in literary criticism. If any one wishes to deny that the categories that follow are intensely American he will need a powerful argument. Some of them are English or French or Russian traits also, but not to the same degree, not in the same way, not so significantly. Taken together, they spell in outline the name of our country when it thinks, feels, imagines, judges, expresses itself in literature.

The first and probably the most deep lying of these characteristics is expansiveness. With Jonathan Edwards, hell itself became expansive. "Rip Van Winkle" is a serio-comedy of expansiveness. Cooper's Natty Bumppo symbolizes the conflict between the expansive soul seeking the freedom of the wilderness, and an expanding civilization always at his heels. Emerson is a spiritualist expansionist. Thoreau wrote "Walden" to turn expansion inward. Mark Twain's boys are always going places, and Whitman's "Song of Myself" links Brooklyn, human nature, the West, and the universe.

But how vitally this trait persists in our literature today! If there is one trend, for example, in American fiction that has amounted almost to a folk lore in this decade, it is the historical novel, which has pushed for its sources backward and left and right across the continent. And note, that these novels, from "Northwest Passage" and the innumerable narratives of prairie settlers, to "Gone with the Wind," have been stories of expansion, of conflict, and of building. It is the re-creation, the expansion, of the new South after the war that is the original and memorable part of "Gone with the Wind," and both hero and heroine are identified with salvage and reconstruction, not with memory and loss. Note again the contrast of this school of history in fiction with the great European novelists of a century earlier. It is lost causes, defeated countries, or heroes in their last stand,

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that Sir Walter Scott chooses for subjects. With him and with Dumas, the vane points always to the past. The theme in the American books is preparation for a future expansiveness.

Or let us choose an individual writer, regarded by many of the younger generation as their leader, Thomas Wolfe. Here is expansiveness incarnate, even as in Whitman, even as in the westward pioneers who lived for frontier experience and moved on when stability caught up with them. Wolfe could write only one book and that was his whole expanding life. His work has a beginning and many middles but no end anywhere. Its faults are apparent, its virtue is an insatiable zest for experience, an expanding ego to which every happening seems important because it happens to Tom Wolfe. Asheville, the railroad, the Harvard library, New York, and love and hate and human nature, all open illimitably when he reaches them. Everything is continental to his view, and he is as immune to classical restraint as a Mohawk chieftain, or Anthony Wayne, or Colonel Sellers, or Moby Dick.

I dislike applying a term such as equalitarianism, with its strongly European connotations, to the next American trait to be discussed, but I can think of no other word so applicable. Nevertheless, American equalitarianism is very different, both in origins and in results from the European variety. Where so many have had—in the past at least—an opportunity to rise in the economic scale, there will be neither an aristocracy nor a plutocracy with that sense of security which produces a class. Equalitarianism and exclusiveness are mutually incompatible, and privilege, which has supported aristocracies elsewhere, becomes a reward of ability, not a heritable right. Our tradition has been bourgeois and our literature has had the bourgeois virtues, which are real and valuable. It has never been successfully heroic, although intellectually it has reached, especially in our earlier New England, formidable heights. But on the austere pinnacles of thinking an Emerson and a Thoreau, if not a Hawthorne, wrote definitely for the community of all men of good will, and believed them capable of good will. So did Jefferson, although himself a product of our Southern experiment in making an aristocracy by the plantation and slavery system, an experiment already failing in his time. It was, indeed, the so-called Virginia aristocracy which founded the political party which has made a political program of equalitarianism.

How strong this equalitarian *motif* is in the majority of American books need not be emphasized here. The difficulty is to find American books of vitality in which it is not a moving force. Poe, who belongs to another phase of the American tradition, is one example. Melville may be regarded as another, Hawthorne as a third, Henry James as a fourth. But Poe was a pathological romanticist, Melville and Hawthorne were skeptics, and James an internationalist. And even these men were all specialists in that inevitable accompaniment of bourgeois equalitarianism, the emphasis upon the individual and individualism. Far from having subsided with the closing of the frontier and the economic changes which have so clamped down on American opportunity, this trait has merely changed its metabolism in the imagination.

The novels of Sinclair Lewis, for example, are essentially studies in the pathology of American ambition. In every important story, from "Main Street" on, he has described the American passion to get on, to be as good as the current Joneses, to conform to success and share it. But the societies that Lewis describes have got their values wrong. They want, like Babbitt, tokens of success, which prove to be only tokens. They have lost sight of valuable ends in contriving efficient means. Or, as in "Arrowsmith" or "Elmer Gantry," they have paid a heavy price for an equality of low ideals and an unworthy success. It is never the right of the American to have what the best have, which Lewis questions. His heroes are all go-getters in their own right. But Americans have gone after the wrong values. He scorns them, *not* because they are going places, but because they have lost their way. In all of this, though with less satire and more philosophy, Thoreau, in "Walden," was his predecessor.

Picking and choosing among the other outstanding attributes of the American tradition, I take next its most puzzling element. Not puzzling in how and why it came about, but puzzling in its action and its unexpected strength and weakness. We are a humanitarian nation, even more so than the British—one might say, the tougher we are, the more humanitarian.

Our record for tough ruthlessness is not a pretty one. If fewer Indians were massacred in Anglo-Saxon than in Spanish territories, it is chiefly because there were fewer Indians to massacre. If we did not reduce the remainders to slavery, they were equally exploited and much more thoroughly dispossessed. The type bad-man of modern literature comes from our West. The gunman and gangster were American specialties until Germany capitalized them for political purposes. If the factory system at its be-

(*Continued on page* 15)

THIS WEEK

Article

PAGE

THE AMERICAN TRADITION IN LITERATURE
By Henry Seidel Canby 3

Reviews

PILGRIM'S WAY—AN ESSAY IN RECOLLECTION
By John Buchan, Lord Tweedsmuir
Reviewed by Oswald Garrison Villard 5

THE FIRE AND THE WOOD
By R. C. Hutchinson
Reviewed by George Dangerfield 6

FAITH FOR LIVING
By Lewis Mumford
Reviewed by Irwin Edman 7

MAN AND SOCIETY IN AN AGE OF RECONSTRUCTION
By Karl Mannheim
Reviewed by John Dewey 10

HERE LIES RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN
By Kenelon Foss
Reviewed by John Anderson 10

THE BIG SEA. AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY
By Langston Hughes
Reviewed by Oswald Garrison Villard 12

SUCH WAS SARATOGA
By Hugh Bradley
Reviewed by Fairfax Downey 13

IN SEARCH OF COMPLICATIONS
By Eugene de Savitsch, M.D.
Reviewed by Mabel S. Ulrich, M.D. 14

MOON TIDE
By Willard Robertson
Reviewed by N. L. Rothman 14

M-DAY
By Donald Edward Keyhoe
M-DAY AND WHAT IT MEANS TO YOU
By Leo M. Cherne
Reviewed by Percy W. Bidwell 17

TWO FRONTIERS OF FREEDOM
By John Corbin
Reviewed by Raymond G. Fuller 18

A YACHTMAN'S COAST PILOT
By H. S. ("Skipper") Smith
Reviewed by Harrison Smith 20

LARZ ANDERSON. LETTERS AND JOURNALS OF A DIPLOMAT
Edited by Isabel Anderson
Reviewed by Charles David Abbott 20

Departments

EDITORIAL 8
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR 9
THE CRIMINAL RECORD 18
THE NEW BOOKS 21
DOUBLE-CROSTICS 23
TRADE WINDS 24

NEXT WEEK

WHAT'S WRONG WITH AUTHORS
By Bennett A. Cerf

THE AMERICAN LANGUAGE
By H. L. Mencken

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John Buchan's "Great Loves"

PILGRIM'S WAY—AN ESSAY IN RECOLLECTION. By John Buchan, Lord Tweedsmuir. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1940. 342 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD

THE late John Buchan loved nature, his country, and his people beyond all else, unless the exception was his fishing-rod. He has written in this volume, correctly termed an "essay in recollection," his memories of these great loves. It is needless to say that it has all the charm, the moving quality, that one had a right to expect of his gifted pen which ventured into so many fields; one could speak of its preciousness if the word did not exclude the robustness and manliness of the book and the man. Here are true and touching pictures of Scotland, England, South Africa, and the United States, made possible by an affection which verged on adoration. His was the seeing eye to which the outdoor world was revealed from earliest childhood. The mere sudden sight of a wood—enclosed meadow or pasture thrilled him to his depth, whether he stumbled on it in the high hills of Switzerland, on a Vermont hillside, or in a Canadian fastness. And that sight always remained with him; added to innumerable others it became a living part of him to be drawn on at need at all times for spiritual refreshment.

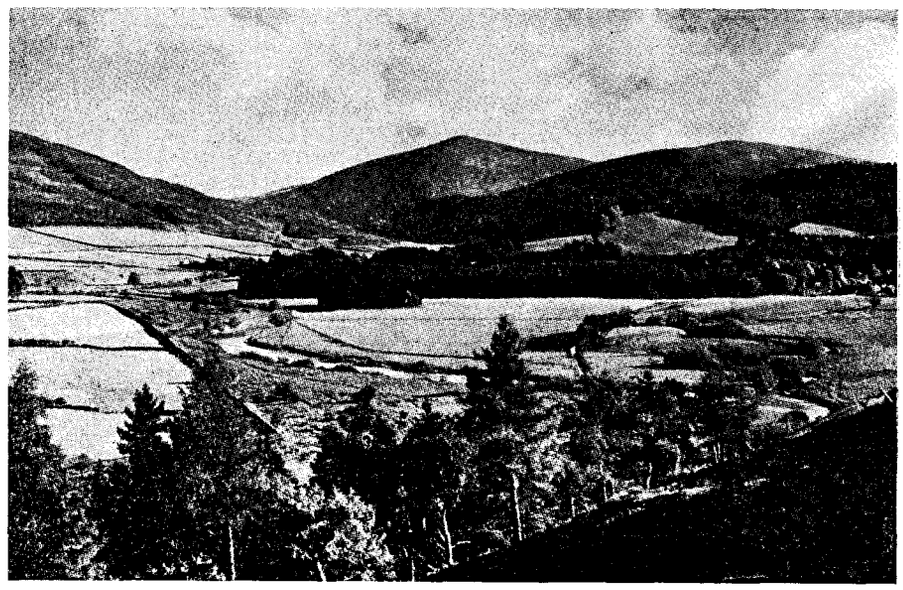
Like so many other English writer-statesmen he lived with the birds of his time and they came to mean so much to him that when their songs died away he felt alone and afraid. His service in Parliament was, he says, largely barren; he never was at ease there. But of one thing he was proud: he wrote and had passed a bill to prevent the sale of English song-birds! To these feathered friends of his life he was ever true, as true as to the hills, the dells, the rivers, the brooks, and rills of his Border country. Well may it set a monument to him.

As for his human friends, this is not merely an essay in recollection; here are portraits, appreciations, and tributes of affection of the highest rank. I know of none other to surpass his moving sketch of Raymond Asquith, to whom he gives eleven pages, and of those others he loved, including a brother who fell in the war that was the greatest failure in all history. Occasionally he says of them, as of that brother, that they were "made for the war," made to end spiritually in that struggle. Withal he is extremely modest—as all through his book—as to these cameo-like modellings of the lives that he shared with such deep intimacy. Of T. E. Lawrence Buchan writes "there is no brush fine enough to catch the subtleties of his mind, no aerial view point high enough to bring into one picture the manifold of his character." Yet I have found no other painting of this amazing genius so full and satisfying as Buchan's; indeed his is the only explanation of the contradictions of that life that really explains it to me. Surely no finer tribute to Lawrence will ever be penned than this one. He feels that Lawrence was "a great writer who never quite wrote a great book." And he says

> I am not a very tractable person or much of a hero worshipper, but I could have followed Lawrence over the edge of the world. I loved him for himself, and also because there seemed to be reborn in him all the lost friends of my youth. If genius be in Emerson's phrase, "a stellar and undiminishable something," whose origin is a mystery and whose essence cannot be defined, then he was the only man of genius I have ever known.

Exquisite as this book is, the reader will look in vain for a deep philosophy or for spiritual manna to help carry one through these terrible times. Lord Tweedsmuir had an enlightened vision of a post-bellum British Empire which he shared with Lawrence, as a voluntary association, with treaty states on a big scale attached to it. He thought the dictators had already served the democracies by awakening them to the value of what they might lose and the true values of life. He rightly feared "decivilization" which is civilization gone rotten. He bewailed our inability to find the geniuses that exist and place them where they could serve and lead. He profoundly feared the shrinking of opportunities for young men. He held deeply to his religious faith, being of Blake's all too true view: "Man must and will have some religion; if he has not the religion of Jesus he will have the religion of Satan, and will erect a synagogue of Satan."

Buchan was obviously a man's man. No woman appears on these pages save the wife to whom his devotion was complete. He carried on well the noble British tradition that men of letters should or could have also public service careers, thus leading a doubly rich life. But one wonders whether he was not of the last of his species; whether any such bookish civil servant, surrounded by all the great English traditions and the rare embellishments of this double life, can possibly survive the war for Britain. If that wonder is correct all the more valuable is this essay in recollection which is history as well as art, and the record of a moving, sympathetic pilgrimage through a most happy life. How keen and faithful and rarely stocked Buchan's memory was appears on every page in a wealth of quotation invariably apt; innumerable evidences of extraordinary erudition make one wonder again how any human being leading as full and active a life could absorb so much and give forth so many books to win him lasting acclaim.



The Scottish Lowlands

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Painful World

THE FIRE AND THE WOOD. By R. C. Hutchinson. New York: Farrar & Rinehart. 1940. 440 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by GEORGE DANGERFIELD

IT is not surprising that the contemporary novelist should find in Nazi Germany something that defies and wearies his imagination. A revolution in reverse, a system motivated by the optimism of despair, an incarnation of "the uncreating word" —these are phenomena before which even the liveliest invention might be excused for retreating. Mr. Hutchinson attempts to give them a shape, and if in the end they defeat him, his failure is not of the kind that will do any damage to his reputation.

"The Fire and the Wood" falls, roughly, into two halves. In the first, the hero is proceeding towards a subtle and private solution of his problem. He is then subjected to the tender attentions of National Socialism, and the second half of the book is strangely blurred. Since many heroes and many problems have actually received this obliterating treatment at the hands of the Nazis, Mr. Hutchinson can be forgiven for projecting it into fiction. Hating Naziism, he has none the less allowed it to dictate to him; any sensitive reader will understand how this could come about.

Mr. Hutchinson's Josef Zeppichmann is a young Jewish doctor, a boy from a raw factory town, who wins a position at the famous Moltke Hospital, an institution of a somewhat conservative nature. Josef's real ambition—which is to find a new cure for tuberculosis—is coldly received at the Moltke Hospital. He is a scientist, he has no particular interest in individual patients; and though he does his hospital work efficiently, he spends his leisure time and his money upon research.

At last, in his own lodgings, the lonely and fanatical young man discovers a human being, a wild servant girl, desperately ill, upon whom he can experiment. At first, he is quite cold-blooded; he does not care whether his patient lives or dies; but the relationship between these two solitary creatures changes until, at the crisis of the experiment, it is entirely personal. At this point, National Socialism intervenes, and Josef disappears into a concentration camp.

At this point, too, the novel begins to lose its outline. It has been, so far, a fine example of the dramatic interplay of unpretentious incident and minute characterization. Now it alternates between the fate of Josef in the concentration camp, and of Minna in the sanitarium; it tells how Minna, only half-cured, procures the escape of Josef, who has himself become ill with tuberculosis; and how they flee on a canal-boat into safety. This latter half of the book should be filled with suspense, and to a certain extent it is; but Mr. Hutchinson prefers to relate it in terms of Josef and Minna, that is to say, in terms of sickness.

Theirs is a painful, at times a delirious world, into which the figures of Nazi officialdom intrude like figures in a nightmare—large, precise, unreal. The symbolism is not inappropriate—the Nazi regime is sick and visits sickness upon its victims; but it produces two contradictory effects. It slows up the action, while at the same time it makes the author seem as if, appalled and exhausted by the images that he has conjured up, he is just as anxious to get away from it all as are his hero and heroine. As I suggested before, no sensitive reader will condemn him for this: there are such things as distinguished and touching failures, and "The Fire and the Wood" is one of them.

"Mr. Hutchinson's failure is not of the kind that will do any damage . . ."

Your Literary I. Q.

By Howard Collins

A SALUTE TO BACCHUS

It's never a long time between quotations about drinks when poets get together. Can you recognize the selections given below? Allow 10 points if you can name either the author or the work from which the quotation is taken. A score of 70 is par, 80 is good, 90 or better is excellent. Answers are on page 12.

1.

A bumper of good liquor
Will end a contest quicker
Than justice, judge, or vicar.

2.

And much as Wine has play'd the Infidel
And robbed me of my Robe of Honour Well,
I wonder often what the Vintners buy
One half so precious as the stuff they sell.

3.

If all be true that I do think,
There are five reasons we should drink:
Good wine—a friend—or being dry—
Or lest we should be by and by—
Or any other reason why.

4.

Let schoolmasters puzzle their brain
With grammar, and nonsense, and learning;
Good liquor, I stoutly maintain,
Gives genius a better discerning.

5.

While wine and friendship crown the board,
We'll sing the joys that both afford;
And he that won't with us comply,
Down among the dead men let him lie.

6.

Not drunk is he who from the floor
Can rise alone and still drink more;
But drunk is he who prostate lies
Without the power to drink or rise.

7.

Oh for a beaker full of the warm South,
Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene!
With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,
And purple-stained mouth.

8.

Few things surpass old wine; and they may preach
Who please, the more because they preach in vain—
Let us have wine and women, mirth and laughter,
Sermons and soda water the day after.

9.

For life slips its tether
When good fellows get together
With a stein on the table
And a good song ringing clear.

10.

Last night at twelve I felt immense;
Today I feel like thirty cents.
At four I sought my whirling bed,
At eight I woke with such a head!
It is no time for mirth or laughter—
The cold, grey dawn of the morning after.

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"Tract for the Times"

FAITH FOR LIVING. By Lewis Mumford. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1940. 333 *pp.* $2.

Reviewed by IRWIN EDMAN

THE readers of a literary journal such as that in which this review appears hardly need to be reminded who Mr. Lewis Mumford is. The author of "Herman Melville," "The Golden Day," "Technics and Civilization," and "The Culture of Cities" deserves to be heard when he turns aside, as his publishers tell us, from a larger work to "anticipate his conclusions," and serve them up as a tract for the times. It must be said at once that Mr. Mumford could have been as well heard if he had not shouted so hysterically, and one was entitled to expect from a writer of his reputation something that resembled analysis more than a secular sermon, unorganized and dripping with pompous sentimentality.

The times are indeed parlous, and so perhaps, Mr. Mumford is to be forgiven for writing a book so obviously composed in a hurry. It may be true, as he himself says, that "it is a vice, in times like the present, to hope when there is no reason to hope, and to exhibit the nicest moral qualms, the most delicate intellectual scruples, in situations that demand that one wade in coarsely and exert one's utmost efforts." Mr. Mumford has certainly waded in, and I should say coarsely, at the risk of being called a Fifth Columnist by others, or hopeless, flabby, asleep, sanctimoniously tolerant; just a few of the names Mr. Mumford chooses in this book to call people who have reservations about his ideas. He has, however, made great efforts to be precise or clear.

Well, since Mr. Mumford recommends wading in coarsely, I should say Mr. Mumford has written a pretty fourth-rate book. As part of the Economics of Sacrifice, which he recommends so ardently, I think he might have renounced (at a time when he thinks we ought all to be ready to die for our ideals) the emotional debauch of expressing, in one confused, shabbily written, and shabbily thought out volume, his love of the family, the land and handicrafts, and his hatred (shared by this reviewer) of fascism and all its works. Mr. Mumford, as a master of fact, devotes a chapter to "The Dread of the Emotions" by liberal intellectuals. He says his country neighbors are "not subtle enough to be as stupid as George Soule and John Haynes Holmes"; this in the middle of a book that describes the love of all humanity as part of the essential meaning of "ideal liberalism." But is it not the fascists whom Mr. Mumford so properly hates who recommend us to think with our blood; is it not the fascists who scorn the intellectuals in terms not dissimilar to those Mr. Mumford uses? Is there not a suspicion that we cannot cure mistakes in thinking by avoiding thought? "Plainly," says Mr. Mumford, "it is the people who have remained calm, assured, unmoved in the present crisis who have given all the breaks to their opponents."

Lewis Mumford's book appears to Irwin Edman to be the "first casualty of that war which this book seems to be written in the midst of."

Our civilization is diseased; are we asked to call in an excited surgeon? In any case, we have an excited surgeon in Mr. Mumford. He is excited, but I am afraid the reader will find this excitement dull. It is not terribly stimulating to one's emotions or even to that intellect for which Mr. Mumford has such virulent scorn, to be told: "Material organization, then, is no substitute for moral order," "our practical institutions will not really be practical unless our ideal institutions are really ideal"; "he who has dropped a seed into a garden or into a woman's womb is ready to fight for the right of that seed to grow and fulfill itself." "Be fruitful, not prudent, increase and multiply your children, not the ciphers in your bank account." Some of the children will die on the battlefield, we are told, but we must have a lot of children because the fascists are having a lot of children.

Perhaps I have made it clear that I think Mr. Mumford's book is not particularly illuminating and that (I fall into Mr. Mumford's own vituperative habits), it is even pernicious. But at least the reader of this review is entitled to know just what the illumination is intended to be. The reason one particularly resents so much fatuousness in this book is because the fatuousness is interrupted by half pages of good sense. Briefly then, the argument, insofar as it is an ordered argument, runs: The barbarians are at the gate, the events of the past fifteen or twenty years have resulted in a collapse of old values. We must start fresh, reëxamine our faith for living, and what we, or our children, would or should be prepared to die for. We have been too intellectual, we have been too optimistic, we have been too much preoccupied with comforts and gadgets and personal satisfactions. We must now be prepared for sacrifice, and meanwhile, we must reconsider what sort of faith for living we can have when, and if, we have repelled the barbarians. There are three items in Mr. Mumford's faith: the family (Dr. Rosenberg, in Berlin, has a lot to say about that, too), the land (also celebrated by the German Propaganda Ministry), and discipline. Marshall Petain, it is said, under German instigation has been talking about discipline, too. It turns out that Mr. Mumford's "discipline" is to come largely through handicrafts. Among other things, handicrafts will cure us of too much mind. So, I am afraid, will Mr. Mumford's book.

In a time of crisis it is still surely the business of a thinker to think. As a man and a citizen he may have other obligations. These may include bearing arms. But surely, if our civilization is worth preserving, responsible thinking is both one of its instruments and one of its glories. I regard Mr. Mumford's "Faith for Living" as the first casualty of that war which this book seems to be written in the midst of.

I recommend that Mr. Mumford read *The London Statesman* from week to week. With bombs flying over London, thinkers in England continue to show discipline — among other things, the discipline of thought.

Irwin Edman, a member of the Department of Philosophy at Columbia University, is the author of "Philosopher's Holiday," and "Candle in the Dark," both of which are published by Viking Press.

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IDEAS AND "DEAD WEIGHT"

THOUGH America has of course no national psychology (for which it may be properly thankful), certain ideas have taken hold at certain times and have helped shape the attitudes of the people. Many of these ideas have been reflected or even fostered in our literature and other cultural media. On the whole, they have served us well in the past, perhaps too well to make for a willingness to re-examine them and change them, if necessary, in the light of changing conditions. Some of these ideas, particularly those growing out of or surrounding our national traditions have become so firmly established as to become fused or confused with the traditions themselves. Thus any examination at all becomes doubly difficult, any change a complex problem of separation and indeed dissolution.

And yet the long association with these ideas should not prevent us from at least the honest attempt to look at them and judge them clearly and critically; whether they can or should be changed is a challenge not so much to the courage as to the intelligence. If ever a nation could use clear, critical thinking to advantage, that nation is our own today. Questions have been thrown our way, most of them without invitation, the answers to which will have to be given one way or the other, and which may very easily decide the type of life you may be allowed to live, and for how long. This is no artificial, trumped-up emergency, but a real, full-blown crisis which has come up almost without warning.

It would be curiously unfortunate if, in attempting to cope with this crisis, we should find that certain ideas we have nourished and sometimes cherished should operate to handicap us in our approach to those problems, and act as dead weight upon critical thinking. Already there appears to be a tendency among some persons to regard these ideas as automatic solutions of whatever may arise, conveniently but unjustifiably relieving them of the necessity for facing problems squarely.

One idea which has been with us so long we seem to feel it instead of thinking about it is that as a nation we are impervious to national catastrophe. This is the legend of invulnerability and invincibility built up out of our triumphant past and taken up and exalted so proudly in a considerable part of our literature and our histories, but insufficient in itself to perpetuate the national welfare. Nor is it a substitute for critical thinking, for which no effective substitute has ever been devised. We have been successful as a nation in the past, but that is no guarantee that we will be similarly successful in the future. If our objective is to keep America free, we shall have to do more than depend upon a legend to do all the work for us. This is an uncomfortable world for legends right now, especially those which seem to promise security to a much larger extent than circumstances might warrant. This does not mean that we should recognize and accept disaster as inevitable; it means that if we are to avoid disaster we shall have to face day by day events on the basis of their requirements and their threats, and not ignore realities because we think we feel it in our bones that nothing can hurt us or even touch us. No; we are not above disaster any more than France was above disaster, or Norway or Belgium or Holland or Denmark. If the storm is coming this way, as it seems to be, it will be difficult to wish it away; not legends nor umbrellas, but shelters will be necessary to keep us dry.

But perhaps we are reluctant to build shelters and to take steps necessary for the continuation of an independent existence because we find it easy to believe that if we allow matters to run their course, somehow, in one way or another, the storm will blow over and everything will be as before. This is another "dead weight" idea which makes for an unwarranted complacency in the face of tangible dangers. In the present situation, it is doubtful if the solution will be automatic. If a solution is found at all, it is likely that it will be found only after considerable effort and considerable thought. It is entirely possible, moreover, that there is no sure-fire solution to be found and that we shall have to be satisfied with the least of a number of evils. But even the search for the least evil will have to be made and will require the best that is in us. Only in that way can we save for ourselves the hope to move ultimately towards positive goals.

There is no space here for an extended description or discussion of these goals. It seems fair to say, however, that at the heart of them is a quality which can be defined most closely by the word justice in all its many applications. But we must remember that justice is perpetuating only to the extent that those who believe in it continue not only to be guided by it but to keep it vital for their own good and strong for their own safety. Of all the "dead weight" ideas, perhaps the most harmful is that which holds that there is no use in exerting ourselves against what we consider to be evil since justice and the good always win out in the end anyway. Justice and the good may triumph in the End, but it is discouraging to contemplate that in our lifetime we may see only the Meanwhile.

N. C.

Freed to Receive

By Lenore G. Marshall

IN spring she heard the robin's song again
Like a green tendril rising from the tree
Addressed to air turned sweeter after rain,
In spring she saw the veined anemone
And belled grape-hyacinth clustered blue and near,
As though the birds piping and flowers wild
Had long since vanished, now to reappear:
She saw them fresh as when she was a child.

Only the child, although the heart was hollowed
Empty of any image, did not seem
To go alone for then a dream had followed;
Now she went unattended by the dream.
No prescience filled the heart when springtime smote,—
Freed to receive the robin's piping note.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

In Praise of P. N.

SIR:—Mark Van Doren's excellent observations on "Poetry and Subject Matter" in a recent issue (*SRL*, August 10, 1940) are just in its analysis, but fail to carry the knife-edge of criticism deep to the heart of the matter. After all, it is not "subject matter" *per se* that is lacking, so much as the framework of reference to give that content form, and that experience meaning. Men still drink wine, wage war, and love—to cite Van Doren's own illustrations—and who are we to say that they do it ill? Life never fails men: it is always men who fail life.

The real void which faces the poet is not one of experience or "subject matter" but one of ideas, values, myths, gods, if you will. It is a result of the inexorable decay of the medieval tradition under the hammer-blows of social change, scientific development, and cultural disintegration. Does that mean that there are no elements of *form* and of *value* in the modern world? God forbid, since that would really be the end. Life is impossible without forms. They are merely less obvious, more complex, more subtle—one might say, more civilized. The critics function should not be so much to bewail lack of form, but to trace those elements of form which exist. That can be no simple task in the modern world.

We have lost no "subject matter": what better subject matter can there be than that ultimate Experience of which Dewey writes, which is the manifold Life that went to the making of Shakespeare's plays? And we need not despair of an age that can produce so much great literature, directly related to its own experiences. Perhaps the palm has gone over to the novel, as against poetry, but is there any reason in this for wailing and gnashing of teeth? And even our poets have not *entirely* forgotten how to sing.

SHOLOM J. KAHN.

El Paso, Texas.

SIR:—Allow me to express my appreciation of your Poetry Number. It is high time that the leading literary periodical in this country devoted an entire issue to poetry, and now that you have done so I think you can take satisfaction in the fact that you have helped lovers of poetry to understand the art in which they are interested, and you have helped the poets themselves to take stock of their function and their responsibility in a troubled world.

I liked particularly the leading article, in which Mr. Benét with much grace and good humor attacked the "cabalistic" poets who are so fashionable today. Give us more of this sort of fearless analysis and literary plain-speaking. There is a speech impediment, whether or not it be tongue-in-cheek I do not know, in the public utterance of a good many contemporary poets and critics of poetry. More clarity, simplicity, and honesty are essential if poets are to regain the large, vital American audience which was once theirs.

The other feature of the Poetry Number which most appealed to me was the article, "Poetry and Democracy," by Selden Rodman. Particularly valuable was the distinction drawn by Mr. Rodman between Marxism and "socialism-plus-democracy"; the stultifying effect of the Marx-mongers and ideology-choppers in American poetry is fortunately counterbalanced by the saner dedication and larger social awareness of poets and critics like Selden Rodman.

KIMBALL FLACCUS.

New York City.

SIR:—The Special Poetry Number of *The Saturday Review* makes me want to shout congratulations to your whole staff from my hills down the valley to you.

We have so little of this kind of critical surveying and we need it so very much.

MARY R. BEARD.

New Milford, Conn.

"No, madam, it's not nailed down. Just more for your money, that's all."

A Morley Bibliography

SIR:—Just before Dr. Alfred Lee of Philadelphia died he had completed the second section of his "Bibliography of the Writing of Christopher Morley." There are several hundred entries in this volume, and it will be of value to the dealer and to the collector. When Dr. Lee was alive, we corresponded with him and it was arranged that we would, if it were at all possible, publish the bibliography.

We want to issue the second part of the Morley bibliography, and sent a notice to a selected list of dealers announcing our plan. We did not, however, receive enough orders to justify publication.

Dr. Lee spent many years of work on this book, without any hope of monetary reward. We want to issue the bibliography for his sake and as a tribute to the work he did, as well as for the benefit of booksellers and collectors. Unfortunately, we are not in a position to stand a loss on a publication. Perhaps if you will print this letter or a portion of it, we will get enough orders to break even. If we do, and if further orders are received, in fact, if there is any profit at all, it will be donated to the Red Cross.

Every dealer in first editions should have a copy of this important reference work for his own use, and every dealer should solicit orders for it.

We repeat that we will undertake this publication with no hope of financial profit.

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The Techniques of Reconstruction

MAN AND SOCIETY IN AN AGE OF RECONSTRUCTION. By Karl Mannheim. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1940. 469 *pp., and index.* $3.50.

Reviewed by JOHN DEWEY

DR. MANNHEIM has had the great advantage of living in both Germany and England in the years of crisis. He has a thorough German training, but he also has a mind flexible enough to learn what new conditions have to teach. The present book represents a combination of experiences in the two countries by a man who is expert in all branches of social theory, who has an open mind, and who is capable of seeing conditions in two very different countries as parts of one and the same social world.

From what happened to the Weimar Republic and the coming of Nazi-ism to power he learned that existing civilization "is faced not with brief unrest, but with a radical change of structure." He reached the conclusion that unless the causes of the social disintegration are understood countries which have not experienced the full impact of the crisis will not be able to "control the trend of events by democratic planning so as to avoid dictatorship, conformity, and barbarism." Living in a country in which "liberal democracy functions almost undisturbed" he was led to consider the means by which societies of the traditional liberal order can re-adapt themselves to the crisis in which the whole modern world finds itself. In Germany he reached the opinion that political democracy had run its course, in England he changed to the belief that if the dissolution of the old social order is admitted, its causes grasped, and the democratic techniques are created, reconstruction can be achieved by other than totalitarian means.

Dr. Mannheim is quite aware that persons in a country like the United States are those who are likely to believe that local causes account for the rise of dictatorships in Europe, and to suppose the idea that the whole social order is undergoing transformation is just a case of shaken nerves. That, as he sees the matter, is just their danger. It will keep persons in democratic countries repeating worn out social creeds so as to justify and support a social order that is bound, in any case, to pass.

When he says that scientific analysis, experiment, and planning are required to develop new techniques if justice and freedom are to be maintained, he may seem to be saying only what is urged from almost every quarter. But one who goes to the book itself will find in it, I think, the best account that exists anywhere of the causes which, in his words, have changed liberal democracy into mass democracy, and how and why it is that these causes tend to create a totalitarian order in the name of mass democracy. By planning exercised in behalf of freedom, he doesn't mean what is called a planned society nor even "planned economic order." He means rather the strategy, consisting of carefully developed techniques, by which a democratic community can maintain itself as a free community—and not just as an aggregate of self-seeking persons who are constantly subject to mass and massive forces.

Mannheim is first of all a social psychologist who sees institutions, historic movements, and emotional and moral attitudes engaged in constant interplay with one another. From the standpoint of the influence the book should have, its weakness is that it tries to combine in the same work an exposition of the methods appropriate to the study of society and a brilliant and—to the present writer—convincing application of this method to the study of what has brought European civilization to its present pass. As a consequence, I fear that the persons who occupy strategic positions in politics, industry, and in what is called intellectual life will be repelled by the scholarship of the book and fail to learn the lessons which Mannheim clearly sets forth when he applies the method to interpretation of actual events. Mannheim's book is free from dogmatism, from stock phrases, and from cliches. In a word, it exemplifies its own teaching, the need of study directed by a fresh outlook.

Sheridan as a Dramatist

HERE LIES RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN. By Kenelon Foss. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1940. 392 *pp., and index.* $3.50.

Reviewed by JOHN ANDERSON

IN any sort of perfect state biographies would be assigned inevitably to the writer most nearly approximating the qualities of his subject. A fine stylist deserves the services of style; a brilliant wit demands the relish of witty portraiture.

In his own lifetime Richard Brinsley Sheridan esteemed these qualities in himself so lightly that he exercised them for the briefest part of his career—the ten years in which he gave the English drama some of its most brilliant comedies. For the rest he bestowed, or wasted, his talents on public life in a career which, through its curious and exasperating lack of reality, suggests that it was the major creation of an imaginative dramatist playing out his own deliberate, but wayward tragedy.

Like the authorities in Westminster Abbey, who assigned the dramatist to the Poets' Corner, Mr. Foss knows that Sheridan's fame rests not on his public career, but on his writing. The trouble is that there is not enough in his literary life for any sort of comprehensive biography. His plays speak glitteringly for themselves, and insofar as "The School for Scandal" is partly autobiographical it sheds some extra light on the author's life in Bath.

But if the dramatist Sheridan is the one that has chief claim on our attention the other is by no means uninteresting. Mr. Foss marshals a considerable background, including the trial of Warren Hastings and the American Revolution for his political protagonist, he deals at length with the Linleys, and with Sheridan's fabulous father and his snooty brother; he follows him meticulously through his love affairs, through his reckless and finally disastrous management of Drury Lane, in which he succeeded at one time, in owing Mrs. Siddons, some £2,000, to his Privy Councilship and his intimacy with Prinny, the Fourth George. He shows his insensate drunkenness, his maudlin remorse at his wasted talents, his decline in public position, and finally his death in a borrowed house, placarded with legal notices of his bankruptcy. He takes him reverently to the tomb after a funeral in which the corpse was knocked on the head by a bailiff and seized for a debt of £500 (quickly shaken out of some eminent and solvent mourners) and he winds up grandly with Old English type quoting "The boast of heraldry, the pomp of pow'r" . . . etc.

It is a book that, in spite of its occasionally cumbersome writing, its failure to give authorities for controversial points, and its absence of stylistic felicity, is well worth reading. A witty writer would never quote a man's witticisms without setting the stage for them and Sheridan's brilliance seems, to be sure, a little dim in Mr. Foss's careful specification of examples. The comic spirit is not so easily catalogued.

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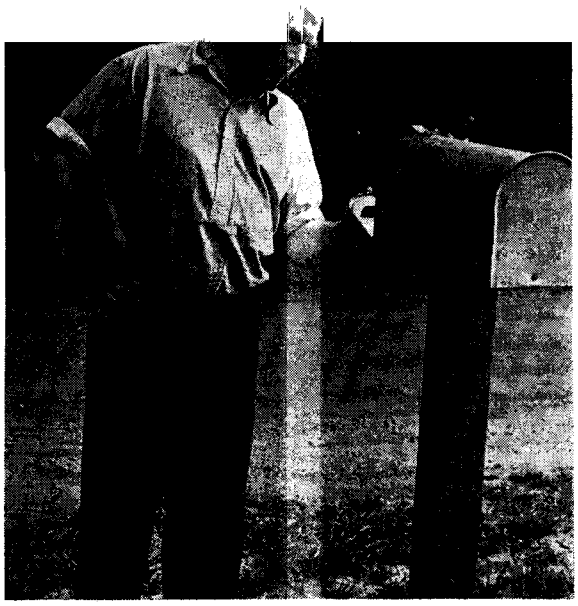
New England Vacation

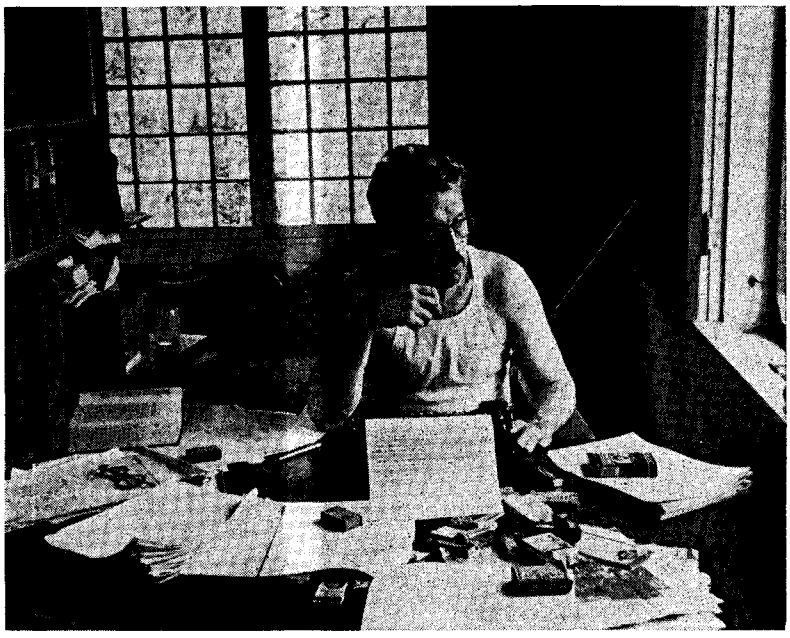
Robert Disraeli, SRL staff photographer, passed the summer without vacation, as usual, because he was too busy taking photos of vacationing authors. Most of his time was spent in New England, the nation's magnet for play- and rest-seekers.

Disraeli's first stopping place was the McDowell Colony at Peterborough, N. H. Here even an SRL editor (W.R.B.) was on hand to give R.D. the customary editorial helping hand. From Peterborough our shooting star lit out for points North, East, and South, finally arriving at the SRL offices in New York with three dozen photographs (Part II of which will appear shortly) but without any summer discoloration of the skin to indicate he had ever set foot out of his native Greenwich Village.

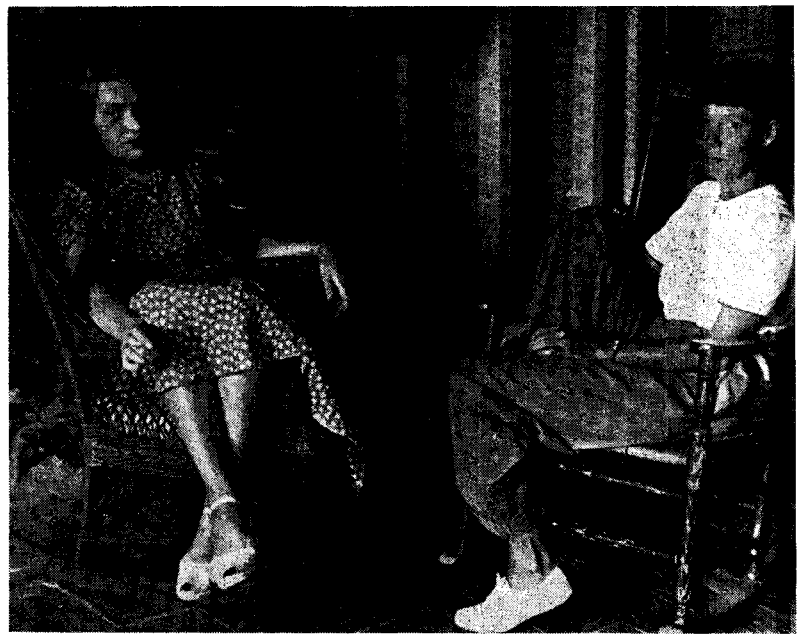


Conrad Aiken, who spends his summers on the Cape and has his "office" there, is concentrating on a group of short stories.

Carl Carmer, at Peterborough, went in for political tomes, corduroy shirts, blazing socks, and a shady spot near the woodpile.



Chad Powers Smith, on a working vacation at Peterborough, finds it difficult to write without eleven packs of gum, three packs of cigarettes, two tins of tobacco, twenty-two packs of matches, two pipes, and three packs of pipe cleaners.



Coöperative vacation at Peterborough. Mrs. Elizabeth Black Carmer, wife of Carl Carmer, talks shop with an expert illustrator of children's books, Marjorie Flack, who is working on a children's book by our own William Rose Benét.

Joseph C. Lincoln, photographed with the Cape in the background, is collaborating on a new book with his son.

The SRL's own William Rose Benét was snapped in an apparent hurry two seconds after the dinner bell rang.

Robert Tristram Coffin spoke of his three eighteenth century houses in Maine, where he lives, works, and vacations.

Frederick F. Van de Water has been a country squire of Black Mountain in Vermont for more than six years.

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The Negro Intellectual

THE BIG SEA. An Autobiography by Langston Hughes. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1940. 355 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD

WHEN I was more than halfway through this book I felt a strong sense of disappointment. It seemed to me that it had not justified itself. It was vulgar in spots, trivial elsewhere; neither the contents nor the style were original, noteworthy, or compelling. But when I laid it down it was with regret. It had taken hold of me, this picture of the itinerant life of a Negro intellectual, mostly at loose ends, with nothing to tie to, and no strong parental hand to direct his life during the formative years.

Primarily it is Mr. Hughes's absolute intellectual honesty and frankness which moved me. He looks at his White and Negro world with rare objectivity and paints it exactly as he sees it. He is not a propagandist, nor a too bitter critic. When he records some of the discriminations from which he has suffered and insults to which he has been subjected he does so almost like an outsider looking in. You feel also that he is not holding something back as so many colored people do when setting forth their views where they may be seen or heard by white folks. More than that, he is as severe in his criticisms of the snobbish colored intellectuals, notably in Washington, as he is of the condescending, race-proud whites.

It will be a shock to many readers to learn that a people so discriminated against as the Negroes has an intellectual uppercrust with all the arrogance, bad manners, and snobbishness of the *nouveaux riches* of Park Avenue, but here the facts are. For example, Mr. Hughes was invited to attend a formal dinner in Washington in honor of the "New Negro" writers, to represent the younger poets. He was told that he might attend although he had no dinner clothes and that his mother was included in the invitation. The afternoon of the dinner his mother was called up by one of the "ladies" of the committee and told that it would not be wise for her to come since she did not possess an evening gown! Needless to say the younger poets were not represented at that dinner by Langston Hughes. That many of these colored intellectuals boast of their illegitimate descent from Southern white families, Mr. Hughes also stresses.

As for himself he makes no claims. He does not write as if he were a genius born and admits frankly how

Langston Hughes

slow he was in coming to his versifying under conditions which would have proved fatal to many a man. He has kept alive by struggling for existence as a sailor, scullion, busboy, cook, clerk, waiter, and laundryman here and in France and Italy, often hungry, sometimes sleeping for weeks in a public lodging-house or leading the life of a beach-comber in a foreign city. All this was on his road to getting a college education and becoming an outstanding poet, dramatist, and writer, and winner of many prizes. There is not a trace of self-pity, nor a whine in the whole book. There is also no yielding of his manhood or his rights as an American citizen. He is one of those uncomfortable people who wish to have ethics and Christian rules of conduct applied at all times. So when at an interracial conference at Franklin and Marshall College, which bars Negro students from attending, Mr. Hughes was wicked enough to think that this, his first interracial student-conference, ought to "get at the root of the matter *right there* on the campus where we were in session—as to why Negro citizens could not attend *that* college." He proposed a resolution on the subject. As he puts it:

> But I could get no action on such a resolution at all. Everybody shied away. And the white director of our conference—an adult professional Young Men's Christian Association leader—said regarding this problem in his final talk to the assembled delegates: There are some things in this world we must leave to Jesus, friends. Let us pray. So they prayed. And the conference ended.

It is not surprising that he has now discovered that "an awful lot of hooey resolves around interracial conferences in this country."

One of the most tragic episodes is Mr. Hughes's description of his being taken up by a rich resident of Park Avenue in New York, who became his patronness and most generously freed him from having to toil for his living so that he might be unhampered for creative work. She wished him to be primitive and "know and feel the intuitions of the primitive." But he was

> only an American Negro. . . . I was not Africa. I was Chicago and Kansas City and Broadway and Harlem. And I was not what she wanted me to be. So, in the end, it all came back very near to the old impasse of white and Negro again, white and Negro—as do most relationships in America.

The break—it was complete—made him physically ill.

> That beautiful room, that had been so full of light and help and understanding for me, suddenly became like a trap closing in, faster and faster, the room darker and darker, until the light went out with a sudden crash in the dark. . . .

Yes, this is a moving, a well worthwhile book which should have been written; a most valuable contribution to the struggle of the Negro for life and justice and freedom and intellectual liberty in America. But I warn Mr. Hughes that when our military dictator takes the saddle "The Big Sea" will burn among the first.

Oswald Garrison Villard, one-time editor and owner of the New York Evening Post *and* The Nation, *has been one of the leaders of this country in the fight to advance the position of the Negro race. As a grandson of William Lloyd Garrison, he comes by his crusading spirit honestly.*

ANSWERS TO LITERARY QUIZ

1. Richard Brindsley Sheridan: "The Duenna."
2. Edward Fitzgerald: "The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam."
3. Henry Aldrich: "Five Reasons."
4. Oliver Goldsmith: "She Stoops to Conquer."
5. John Dyer: "Down Among the Dead Men."
6. Thomas Peacock: "Misfortunes of Elphin."
7. John Keats: "Ode to a Nightingale."
8. Lord Byron: "Don Juan."
9. Richard Hovey: "A Stein Song."
10. George Ade: "R-E-M-O-R-S-E."

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Horsey Country

SUCH WAS SARATOGA. By Hugh Bradley. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1940. 386 *pp., with bibliography and index.* $3.

Reviewed by FAIRFAX DOWNEY

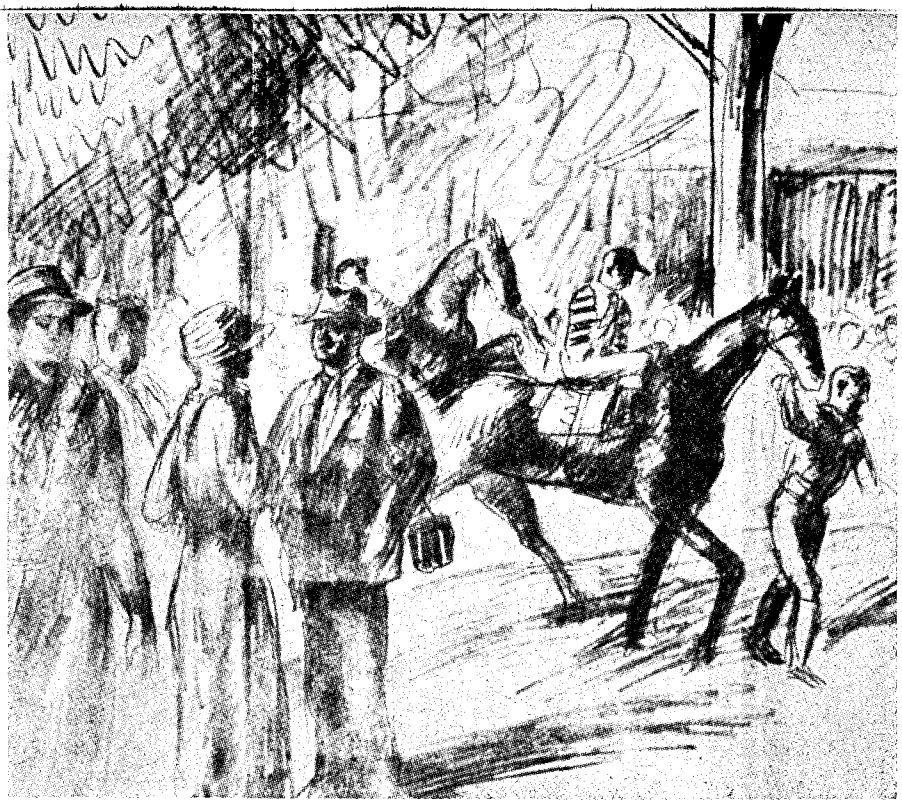
EVERYTHING from scalps to shirts, from virtue to avoirdupois has been lost at Saratoga. Gentleman Johnny Burgoyne dropped a decisive battle of the world there. Hundreds of thousands of dollars vanished in the elegant gambling hells of "Big Smoke" Morrissey and Dick Canfield and at the race track. The hotel business took chances with fire or failure. But you always got a run for your money at Saratoga, as you still do. For every loser there was a winner.

Among the winners will be readers of this book about Saratoga. If, as a philosopher avowed, reading maketh a full man, Mr. Bradley brings home the Bacon. His research was extensive, and he is able not only at digging it up but at writing it down—a happy combination not too often found. He has rolled the dry bones of history and made his point in a lively chronicle.

It all began with water, the curative waters of the Saratoga springs. The Indians kept them secret until the middle of the eighteenth century when they carried there to be healed of an old wound Sir William Johnson, their British superintendent. Sir William, having sired scores of children by Indian mistresses, the Iroquois may have thought they were keeping the secret of the springs in the family. But the baronet proved to be Saratoga's first press agent. Visitors began to arrive. Non-paying guests such as Indians, bears, panthers, and rattlesnakes were routed. By 1789 the three log cabins which were the accommodations of the time were packed and jammed with tourists from Albany and as far away as Hartford. Saratoga was launched as a spa. Its story unrolls a panorama of the American social scene in its summer resort phase which none of its rivals, though some of them became more fashionable, can pretend to equal.

Saratoga became known as a spot where one could sin safely and stylishly. And always the niceties were observed. Although the big hotels insisted on decorum within their portals, cottages "solved the problems of numerous lonesome Wall Street tycoons and Western copper kings," moved to visit the resort accompanied by "obscure but beautiful nieces" or by as many as five fair secretaries. What if the rent of cottages in boom times rose to $125 a day? "It usually," opines the author, "was worth it."

Here, well worth the reading, is a parade of modes and manners and people and things, including the invention of Saratoga chips for a diner who liked his fried potatoes sliced thin. This reviewer can complain only of the lack of illustrations. With many fine woodcuts and photographs available, the publishers have skimped by with a jacket design, an end-paper street plan, and one title page vignette.



Drawing by Guy Pene du Bois, for a mural in the lobby of the Saratoga Springs, N. Y., Post Office.

"Saratoga"

Jersey's Golden Strand

ENTERTAINING A NATION: THE CAREER OF LONG BRANCH. By Reynolds A. Sweetland and Joseph Sugarman, Jr. (New Jersey Writers' Project). The City of Long Branch, N. J. 211 *pp. Chronology, bibliography, index, and map.* $1.

Reviewed by JAMES A. NELSON

AMERICA'S "gilded age" might dispute a later period's right to the title, "the era of wonderful nonsense"—and lay claim to both designations. A strong supporting document would be this grand anecdotal history of a seashore watering place that saw great railroad, patent-medicine, and gambling fortunes at play when the fortunes were making their mightiest experiments in ostentation.

Long Branch's spectacular rise and decline and its chance for a more golden future parallel to a remarkable degree those of Saratoga. Health, horses, and "hells" of gambling were the chief attractions at both resorts. Each still has its hygienic appeal, and the pari-mutuels are operating in Saratoga and soon will be in Long Branch.

Mrs. Abraham Lincoln started the parade of celebrities to Long Branch, which later became a summer capital for Presidents Grant, Hayes, Garfield, Arthur, and Wilson. "Shadow Lawn," the mansion in which Wilson lived, still stands with its gold-plated plumbing intact. And many of the older and even more fantastic mansions with their minarets, turrets, cupolas, and fret-work—notably "Alladin's Palace," owned by Solomon R. Guggenheim—stand today by the sea.

The Gaudy Great of the late eighteen hundreds took "The Branch" and the Monmouth Park track to their hearts: Phil Daly, the Wideners, Lily Langtry, August Belmont, Diamond Jim Brady, Lillian Russell, George F. Baker, Maggie Mitchell, and hundreds of others all were there in antic style, including John Hoey, who grew vast gardens in the patterns of Teheran rugs with "borrowed" Adams Express Company money.

This book is the gorgeous record of it all, from the days when the Iroquois Indians visited Long Branch for—surprisingly enough—vacations—to today, when visitors still resemble Indians.

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Medical Raconteur

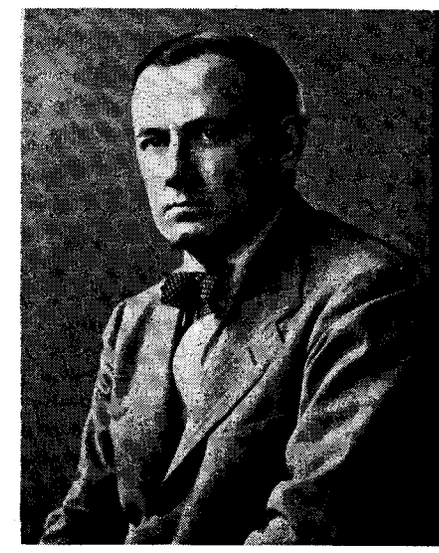
IN SEARCH OF COMPLICATIONS. By Eugene de Savitsch. New York: Simon & Schuster. 1940. 396 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by MABEL S. ULRICH, M.D.

LET it be said at once that Dr. de Savitsch's story, as he himself tells it, ranks primarily as entertainment. His comments on medicine and surgery, shrewd and stimulating as many are, seem but added color to an adventurous tale. And that I think will be good news to those who are beginning to yawn at the prospect of still another doctor autobiography.

Eugene de Savitsch was born in Russia thirty-seven years ago into a well-to-do family of White Russians. When the Revolution could no longer be dismissed with haughty words and disdain, his mother journeyed to Japan with him and his sisters that they might continue their education while they awaited the passing of the storm. At seventeen he joined up with the White army in the Far East. Back in Japan, thoroughly disillusioned, his father lost in the turmoil, his mother's funds practically exhausted, he supported himself in a series of fantastic jobs and saved enough ($240) to come to San Francisco on a forged passport. Here he sold gingham in a department store, was discharged, worked in a sugar factory, and worn out by hunger and fatigue, contracted tuberculosis. There followed two years in a sanitorium from which he emerged cured and determined to become a doctor. With the help of friends, temporary jobs, and fellowships he studied at the Universities of Colorado and Chicago, assisted and watched in hospitals in Paris, Antwerp, Vienna, and others, and went off to the Congo to collect sleeping-sickness brains, a wide operating experience, and the technique of elephant hunting. Back in America again he hung out his shingle in Washington, D. C., where we leave him, convinced for our part that his adventures will continue to pile up until they surpass even those of the naive Mr. Smith of movie fame.

All of this merely suggests the geography of the story. But perhaps it is enough to show that Dr. de Savitsch is far from a Dostoievsky hero. No dreamer he, but a realist with a keen eye cocked for every opportunity for advance in the profession he has unsentimentally chosen. But his eye is a roving one as well, and it is his quick delight in contrasts, in the comedy inherent in situations and persons, the wit and understanding with which he evaluates his experiences, that give the book its uncommon interest. Doctors may not assent wholeheartedly to his comments on American medical training and hospital regimentation, but they cannot fail to be actively interested in his lively critique of French methods and in his comparisons of the various European schools and their contributions. Laboratories and hospitals figure largely in the story, but after its reading the pictures that linger are of a little Russian schoolboy arguing politics with his chum and joshing with Red soldiers, of a densely crowded train creeping across Siberia while a brave and gracious lady serves tea from a huge aluminum kettle, of a boy counting fish in the basement of a Tokyo hotel, of the same lad trembling before the cowering prisoners he has been ordered to shoot, of a youth's first walk in the Land of Opportunity and of hunger and loneliness.



Eugene de Savitsch

Perhaps nothing in this life story is more surprising than that in its telling there is no evidence in style or vocabulary that English is not its author's native tongue. English, we are told, is the Doctor's third language.

Willard Robertson

Human Actor and Writer

MOON TIDE. By Willard Robertson. New York: Carrick & Evans. 1940. 309 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by N. L. ROTHMAN

THE author's photograph, on the back of the dust cover, will perhaps be strangely familiar. Mr. Robertson is, among other things, a movie actor of considerable versatility, and you may have seen him as a lawyer, or a sheriff, or a farmer, or a harassed family man, all played with characteristic shrewdness and warmth. This is quite relevant to the matter at hand, for Mr. Robertson's very human style of acting is apparently deep-rooted in the man. He has put these same qualities into his first novel and made a very sound job of it. "Moon Tide" revolves about a situation simple to the point of tenuousness. You have a derelict Swede sailor who takes a job as helper on a bait barge, on the San Pedro coast. He prevents a girl's suicide—a little waitress he had seen one day—and takes her on his barge to keep an eye on her. There is a brief, happy interlude, and then she dies anyway, by the merest mischance. Thus the tale ends just as it seems about to begin.

There is no substance here for either depth or heroics, but rather an opportunity to speak simply of a few fundamentals. This opportunity Mr. Robertson realized thoroughly, and used it so. With unfailing taste he avoided the sentimentality that might easily have choked the tale; it is all the more genuinely effective because Swede and the girl, and the roustabouts, Japs, bartenders, fishermen, who fill in the scene, all speak a direct and earthy tongue that has the sound of truth in it. The characters are the book in this case. Quite apart from the brief episode, they move about on the waterfront and in the cafes with a vigor of their own. They bring us a strong and visualized picture of the California fishing coast. In all Mr. Robertson has managed to put a good deal into his disarmingly simple tale.

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(*Continued from page* 4)

ginning was more ruthless in England, that was simply because British men, women, and children were more helpless. There was less room and less food. The most influential humanitarian book in English, one of the most effectively moving books of all time, "Uncle Tom's Cabin," was directed not so much at slavery as such, as against the ruthless exploitation of the Negro for quick profits in the boom cotton lands of the frontier. We have never been slow with knife, pistol, or whip.

And yet never was a nation so readily touched emotionally to humanitarian ends as the American since the nineteenth century made the idea of humanitarianism familiar. The North took back the South after the Civil War without a proscription, an unheard of thing then, before, or after, in a Civil War. If there was oppression and exploitation later, that came from the other strain in our make-up. Our foreign-mission effort, of which at least two-thirds was humanitarian in its appeal, has been vast in proportion to means and population. No cause that awaked pity or sympathy has ever failed of support in this country, and as we grow rich, our contributions to world suffering have expanded out of proportion. The type political machine of the United States, Tammany, to whose methods the Nazis owe much, was built upon a basis of genuine humanitarianism combined with exploitation without scruple.

The cause, of course, of this deep-set trait is no superior quality of mercy in the stocks that settled America. However, the fact of settlement itself made them will to re-form themselves and their circumstances. Newcomers, torn from a settled environment, facing new conditions of living, separated from the tradition of stable communities upon which law and custom is based, they *had* to re-form themselves, and sooner or later re-form their neighbors. The frontiers of the United States have usually been advanced by pioneers who, having reformed themselves once to the freedoms and necessities of the wilderness, did not choose to re-form themselves again to suit an approaching civilization. Reform in its broadest implication is in our blood because we have been conditioned by it for generations. It has become traditional, and this tradition the experiences of the latest immigrants into our industrialized society has not invalidated. They also have had both the opportunity and the necessity of re-forming themselves.

But this reforming habit of mind did not have to become humanitarian. It did not have to become moral. It was the influence, undoubtedly, of the strong Protestant tradition of a reforming ethics which made our tradition of reform so moral in its implications. An interesting comparison can be made here between the re-forming of Latin civilization in both North and South America, and our own. With the Latins, the ethical element in reform was weak, even though the religious element was durable. They sought a rich life rather than a good one.

And it was the influence of abundant opportunity in a continent working upon this ethical prepossession that seems to have made the peculiarly American blend of humanitarianism. It is more sentimental than the English because, except perhaps in the question of slavery, it has never been harshly tested. It is notably more widespread, being not confined to a class, as in the humanitarianism of the Victorian middle class, but even more characteristic of the worker than of the *rentier* or successful exploiter. It is more generous among men and women of small means because our opportunities have been more generous. We have never had to be stingy or mean, at least as a nation. Economically it may ruin us yet, for it is behind the easy good nature that, quite as much as predatory politics, is responsible for such disastrous handouts as our pension system and the uncritical character of much of our relief.

To stretch out the long list of notable American books which carry on the tradition of this humanitarianism is quite unnecessary. There are, as a matter of fact, few really hard-boiled books in the American tradition. Those which appear to be so, usually under scrutiny show, like Poe's stories of terror, a shrinking sensitiveness to pain, or like Hemingway's tough episodes,

and so to Bath

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a defensive mechanism against fear. But in the main stream of tradition, the trait is self-evident. Curiously enough, the two great men of Concord, Emerson and Thoreau, have the least of it. They have good will toward all good men, yet, Thoreau especially, are not easily moved to emotion by ills not spiritual in origin. But there is passionate and uncritical humanitarianism in Walt Whitman. There is sentimental humanitarianism in Bret Harte, whose stories of the easily aroused pity of gold-diggers and camp prostitutes seem to have had sufficient base in reality. There is a passionate and unsentimental humanitarianism in Mark Twain—at its best, I think, in "Huckleberry Finn," where it is veiled by irony. And, coming to our own times, regard again for an instant Sinclair Lewis, whose "Babbitt," felt at the time of its publication to be a document in reform, seems now to be not so much a satire as a lament for the good American warped by the irresistible pressure of commonplace ideals. Or consider Theodore Dreiser's "American Tragedy," which, for all its appearance of callous documentation, is at base pity for an ordinary man caught in tragic circumstances and doomed by his public's pathological craving for sensation to relieve its own dull lives.

I shall choose for my last earmark of the American tradition—youth. With more time and analytical shrewdness, it might be possible to distinguish a dozen more, but this one cannot be neglected. Perhaps it is the most important, probably it is the most determining characteristic of all. I am not so naive as to speak of America as a young nation politically and economically.

But in literature—and the arts in general—we are still extraordinarily young. In fact, it is obvious that we have been growing younger and younger as decade by decade we have wrenched further and further away from European, and especially English tradition. Jonathan Edwards and Benjamin Franklin were European minds only slightly affected by a new environment. Irving and Cooper are still old minds functioning with new material. Emerson and Thoreau are full of new sap, but their youthfulness is not in manner; it is hope in the one and rebellion in the other. With Mark Twain and Whitman a raw kind of youthfulness appears—brash, vulgar, disregardful of the rules. They write like youngsters even when they are old. Energy begins to be the chief attribute of great Americans, a crude and wasteful energy, not regardful of the labor-saving devices of classicism. Such men write both badly and well, and on the same page. The vigorous, pushing imagina-

Thomas Wolfe

tions grow more and more experimental, more and more indifferent to anything but quick expression. It is not literature that excites them any more, but the country. They go to it for news, and their reporting in prose or poetry is news, with the equality of journalism, which becomes an American art. The proportion of the writers who work in the great literary tradition to the innovators and expressionists grows steadily less. Finally, in our own time, the public taste itself changes and readers fall avidly upon the sensations of their own land.

What is young here is, of course, the imagination, which at last is beginning to construct its images in terms of a new continent. And there are many other signs of youth in this imagination besides its reckless and untiring energy. American writing for a half century has tended to begin everything and finish it fast. In fiction, the short story has been its chosen form, and its very best writers—even such classicists as Willa Cather—have been at their best in briefish stories. Others, like Caldwell, Faulkner, Hemingway, Wilder, Steinbeck, Sherwood Anderson, have begun to falter every time they have tried to sustain their work in the dimension of a complete novel. Their great success is in the short story, single or compounded.

Another trait which seems to me characteristically youthful is the curious duplex quality of the American imagination. Ever since the beginnings of our national literature this has been manifest. In the upper story we tend to be cheerful, generous, optimistic, humorous. But downstairs, writer after writer has been caught, sometimes fatally, by the macabre, the satiric, the sardonic, the horrible. The truth is, that since the American imagination really began to busy itself with America as a subject for literary interpretation, it has been going places with such youthful and nervous rapidity that relapses into pessimism or distrust or plain hysteria were inevitable. It has, as I have said, been primarily engaged with news, and what has been found has been described more often than interpreted.

The moral I have tried to draw in this paper is a very simple one. In our culture, we are definitely a nation in the making, and this is our tradition, and still governs us. This culture has had two climaxes. The first was just before the Civil War, when, still largely English in civilization, but feeling our new environment, we broke into extraordinary waves of duplex energy, some material, some spiritual. The second climax, I suspect, we are living in now, and European chaos may hasten its movement.

In both climaxes, the formative elements of our tradition are powerful. We have lost little from these, and are steadily adding to a distinctive heritage. It is not a literary culture to boast about yet, as one can boast of our political and economic progress even while deploring our errors. But it still expansive, and perhaps never so interesting to a student of criticism as now.

You get one aspect of it today in the cheaply optimistic magazine, which is all wish psychology, like the pioneer. You get another in our ironical, sophisticated books, and magazines like *The New Yorker*, where idealism is handled skeptically by a good-natured fellow who does not intend to be fooled. You get still another in deadly serious reformers, like Steinbeck. You get still another in brutal tough guys, who easily turn tender. Still another in the vulgar smartness of gossip columns, the trim emptiness of Broadway plays, the mechanical short story.

But make no mistake. The expansiveness of a hearty America, good-willed, hopeful, energetic, is not dead. Tom Wolfe echoes Whitman; Steinbeck, Harriet Beecher Stowe. When this generation gets through with going places, we may expect another period like that really great New England stir of the imagination which was frustrated by materialism and war. Unfortunately, there is another war on, but I doubt whether any European involvement can now change the direction, though it may add to the qualities, of our American tradition.

This article is from an address, the Avery Hopwood Memorial Lecture, given by Dr. Canby at the University of Michigan, and is published in full in the Michigan Alumnus.

The illustration on page 3 *is from a mural by Ward Lockwood.*

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If War Comes

M-DAY. By Donald Edward Keyhoe. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1940. 96 *pp.* $1.

M-DAY AND WHAT IT MEANS TO YOU. By Leo M. Cherne. New York: Simon & Schuster. 1940. 103 *pp.* $1.

Reviewed by PERCY W. BIDWELL

WASN'T it Stephen Leacock who observed, "You can't dramatize the Interstate Commerce Act"? Mr. Keyhoe's subject, the Industrial Mobilization Plan, certainly lends itself more readily to dramatic treatment. In a succession of imaginary news bulletins and conversations, he presents vividly the alterations which war will bring in the daily lives of ordinary people, clerks, small business men, lawyers, contractors, housewives, farmers, etc. The theme is control—control of all types of business activities directed from Washington for the purpose of making the most effective use of our manpower, our industrial equipment, and our raw material resources.

Actually the Plans for Industrial Mobilization, as published jointly by the Secretaries of War and Navy, are rather general; they indicate only vaguely and in broad outline what measures of control will be applied to labor, to business, and to the expression of public opinion. The author's active imagination has filled up the gaps in the Plan, but he has not taken pains to warn the reader when he makes the transition from fact to fancy.

Mr. Keyhoe tells us, for example, that the Industrial Mobilization Plan will be put into effect immediately upon the declaration of war. Maybe his guess is right, but the War Department holds differently. According to Department Plans, some of the controls may be introduced even before war is declared, others several months later when need for them has become apparent. But of course it is more in the Hollywood style to have regimentation descend like a cloudburst.

The description of the elimination of cancerous fifth column activities on M-Day is presented in the best Western thriller style. Bloody uprisings stimulated by enemy agents mark the opening days of war. But their instigators are swiftly dealt with by the F.B.I., aided by World War veterans. All over the country, front organizations topple, the camouflage is ripped away from anti-loyal youth organizations, peace societies, and civil liberties groups. After some 500,000 hostile aliens and disloyal citizens have been put in concentration camps, the national morale is restored. "Open sedition becomes almost unknown, as the death penalty for spies ceases to be a novelty."

Mr. Keyhoe is right in stressing the fact that war would inevitably bring the extension of government control over many aspects of civilian life, but he gives the reader no understanding of the difficulties which underlie the fixing of wages and of prices, of the serious problems to be solved in installing a war economy within the framework of our system of democracy and free enterprise. The task is represented as much too easy. The implication is given that the mere exercise of force will win every battle on the home front.

Mr. Cherne's book shows a closer acquaintance with War Department Plans, particularly those which are not given general circulation. For the melodramatic approach of Mr. Keyhoe, he substitutes the "brass tacks" question and answer method. Thus in half the book he supplies information about conscription in the next war; who will be called, what exemptions will be allowed, what pay will be received, what are the chances of deferment in various occupations, what will happen to conscientious objectors. The answers are based partly on the draft of a Selective Service Act which has been prepared by the War Department, and partly on the experience of 1917-1918. An outsider, viewing the struggle now going on in Congress over the military conscription act, might doubt the reliability of some of Mr. Cherne's predictions.

The picture of price controls, priorities, and possible commandeering which Mr. Cherne paints will not be pleasant reading for the business man. But these controls will be tempered to essential industries. Consequently, it will be of advantage to every business man who can possibly do so to make his enterprise an essential one. Specific advice is given on how to accomplish this purpose.

Percy W. Bidwell is Director of Studies of the Council on Foreign Relations.

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SATURDAY REVIEW OF LITERATURE

By
ANTON ROOTHAERT
$2.50 at all bookstores. MACMILLAN

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Republic vs. Democracy

TWO FRONTIERS OF FREEDOM. By John Corbin. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1940. 420 *pp.* $3.50.

Reviewed by RAYMOND G. FULLER

THIS, even in these times, is not a book about saving democracy. The dictators are right, according to Mr. Corbin, in saying that democracy, as a form of government, makes nations weak and futile in dealing with problems of defense and internal welfare. But he does not believe in autocracy, either. There is a *tertium quid,* namely, the kind of government which was in the minds of the framers of the American Constitution. It was a republic, not a democracy, which they sought to establish—and did, though we have since departed in thinking and practice from that conception. Mr. Corbin deals at length with the distinctions between a republic and a democracy, chiefly by means of an historical discussion of events preceding the Convention of 1787 and the later degradation (or democratization) of the republican plan, especially during the nineteenth century. "Back to republicanism" (with a small "r") is his thesis; or, in the words of one of his chapter headings, "Forward with the Constitution."

To readers who, like the reviewer, adhere to "the democratic dogma," which to us signifies rather a democratic tradition and growth, many of the attitudes expressed in this book toward the people and their participation in government will be irritating and stimulative of argument. Nevertheless, there is a good deal of truth, perhaps too much, in what the author has to say about the imperfections and shortcomings of democracy. He is apparently just as much concerned as we democrats over such present unsolved problems as employment for all the able and willing, and if Mr. Corbin's republicanism can help make democracy work, that certainly ought to be all right with us! He has not only philosophical but practical suggestions to offer.

Too much stress, he thinks, is put on individual liberty and not enough on collective liberty. Individual liberty is self-destructive unless controlled by regard for the general welfare, and this means method and organization for collective control. Resolution of the conflict between freedom and control is the essence of republicanism, says Mr. Corbin; and if that isn't one of the vital requirements of successful democracy, what is? What Mr. Corbin would do is to put more of the management of public affairs into the hands of the wise and good, the competent and qualified, leaving less to the legislators, politicians, and voters. In other words, he is for intelligent bureaucracy, or more specifically, for administrative tribunals somewhat on the order of the Interstate Commerce Commission.

Recognizing the growth of industry since the Constitution was framed and adopted, and the rise of "industrial states," he would bring these industrial states under the Constitution, and give them equal recognition with the geographical or political states and at least an equal measure of self-government. The basic idea of the NRA was sound, badly as it worked out: the idea, that is, of industrial self-government aided and controlled by a central authority in the interest of the general welfare. To carry out this idea properly we need an industrial clause in the U. S. Constitution paralleling the commerce clause, and we need truly representative tribunals composed of the great leaders in the several industries, both of management and of labor.

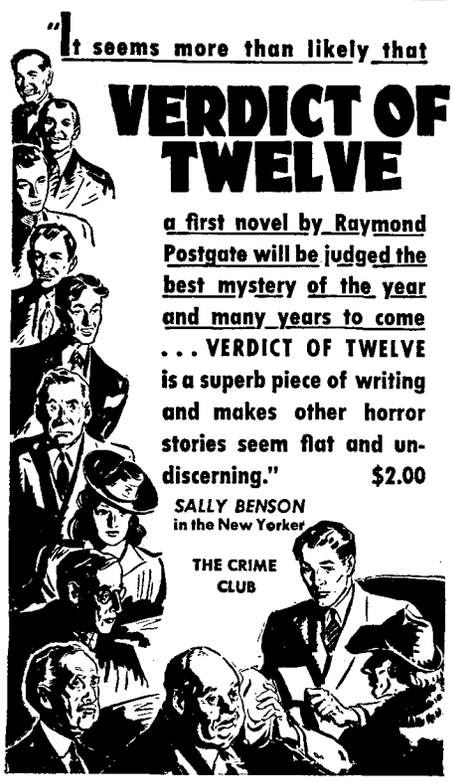
In a few concluding chapters Mr. Corbin writes of our foreign relations and of the possibilities of a reconstructed and republicanized League of Nations. "The time may come when the NRA, and for that matter the League, will stand forth in a light of glory denied to those who have scoffed at them—may come, that is, if we take thought, and only so."

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 335)

W. A. WHITE

A PURITAN IN BABYLON

In the terrible decade when he was in his place of greatest power, Calvin Coolidge lacked the vision to exercise the highest judgment. He was handicapped by his background, circumscribed by his life's pattern. . . .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The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	*Crime, Place, and Sleuth*	*Summing Up*	*Verdict*
THE FOUR DEFENCES *J. J. Connington* (Little, Brown: $2.)	Corpse in blazing car on English highway presents nice problem to Radio Counsellor Brand who revels in difficult crime solving.	Fairly bulging with plot, shrewd villainy, keen deducing and bright conversational byplay — all making up for paucity of movement.	Puzzling no end
THE SPIDER AND THE FLY *R. A. J. Walling* (Morrow: $2.)	Jewel robbery in English country house starts Mr. Tolefree on trail that leads to murder, and discomfiture of astute plotter.	Triumphant exception to usual rule that early murder is needed to hold reader's interest. Late killing here comes almost as relief.	Unexceptionable
MAIGRET ABROAD *Georges Simenon* (Harcourt: $2.)	Insp. Maigret in two more short masterworks. First has Dutch background; in second Maigret commits deathless suicide to break case.	Shrewd sleuthing of both tales overshadowed by realistic and psychological passages—but it's there in bountiful measure.	*Vive* (live, or, long live) *Maigret!*
WE WILL MEET AGAIN *John* and *Ward Hawkins* (Dial: $2.)	Death of corrupt deputy sheriff blamed on mouthpiece who socked him. Lawyer goes to jail but inflexible copper rights wrongs.	Prison scenes—presumably in San Quentin—are best part of story. Rest of it follows familiar lines of gangster-politico opera.	Adequate thriller
THE UNCOMPLAINING CORPSES *Brett Halliday* (Holt: $2.)	Miami realtor involves red-headed investigator Shayne in three nasty killings. Sleuth quaffs cognac liberally and reveals slimy plotter.	Pretty scurvy lot of characters, considerable slugging, rough language, and solution that is not quite unexpected.	Torrid

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Britain Before 1776

LAWRENCE HENRY GIPSON: Zones of International Friction; Volume IV. North America, South of the Great Lakes Region, 1748-1754. By Lawrence Henry Gipson. New York: A. A. Knopf. 312, *xliv pp.* $5.

Reviewed by H. I. PRIESTLEY

PROFESSOR GIPSON has in this book completed the fourth of twelve proposed volumes on "The British Empire before the American Revolution." The first three, which have been generously received by the professional historical public of this country, discussed the social, economic, and political characteristics of Great Britain and Ireland—the reasons, by and large, for the take-off from Europe, and the variegated qualities of the British stance in the northern and southern colonies of our Atlantic seaboard.

Now he essays delineation of the British imperial expansion westward to the Mississippi and south of the Great Lakes immediately prior to the Seven Years' War, the interval covered being 1748 to 1754; and the *Zones* being: the Florida frontier, where the enemy was Spain; then, the Cherokee country, the lower Mississippi, the Illinois, and, finally, the sharply disputed area of Ohio just before the French and Indian War (1754-1763). Not willing to crowd his screen, the author reserves for Volume V the remaining features of the imperial picture within the same years; that book will portray the international conflict on the Great Lakes frontier, the problem of the balance of power held by the Iroquois, the formation of the Albany Plan, imperial Canada, the occupation of Nova Scotia, the Franco-British rivalry in India, the fight for the West Indies, and the outbreak and diplomatic background of the last true colonial war.

It is a good thing, now that imperialism is being widely challenged by those who have been subjugated, by those who have subjugated nothing, and even by those who have conquered everything but will not retreat, to go in greater detail than hitherto into the actual motivations and field operations of the great modern empires on their fringes. No matter what opinion one may hold today on the subject of imperialism, it must be remembered that none of the processes by which the great pre-Revolutionary empires were hewn out of the extra-European world gave particular offense to the public conscience of the world. Curiously enough, when we come to details of the occupation of frontiers, as Gipson here does, there seems to have been even less of the predestined and foreordained in the process than we now read into it.

Frontiers in America, as the men on the ground saw them, were regions in which white Europeans of varying nationalities and religions worked hard, first, for their own personal advantage, then utilizing the earmarkings of nascent nationality and rationalized religious convictions to bring about their ends. They won or lost their momentary advantages over each other by cajoling or manipulating Indians, who either stood their ground with ever increasing bewilderment in the midst of the European rivalries or shrank into protecting areas with constant diminution of numbers, or assisted the least dangerous of the white nationals, who were fighting against both the red man and nature to secure frontiers which constantly refused to stay put.

The outstanding feature of this incessantly moving continental struggle was the tremendous vitality of the old British empire in contrast with the lethargy of the Spanish one and the unpreparedness and official dishonesty of the French one. There is a good deal in this book which attempts to explain Anglo-Saxon success as compared to Latin American by adducing the superior social dynamics of the British population, and their outstanding private initiative, together with an arrogation of self-righteousness for that endowment. Against this egocentric point of view, two facts might be more carefully weighed: one is geographic, the other historical. In the first case, the British began their American spread from a shore of the continent well watered by navigable streams flowing in the direction of their spread, whereas the Spaniards, with their papal claim to the entire continent, met the opposite condition in their northward advance from the small, sedentary area until, passing through lands only partially agricultural and watered by streams which impeded their march, they met the great continental barrier stretching from Florida to the Pacific. No historian has yet adequately weighed the influence of this conflict with nature, where even trees and animals were halted by this belt, known in our childhood geographies as the Great American Desert, upon the economic advance of Spain which even in its swaddling clothes of imperial regulation demonstrated one of the most tremendous population movements of modern times. If in the accident of history, it had been Latins who had landed on Plymouth Rock and Puritans who had fought their way inland from Vera Cruz, there would have been appreciable differences in the subsequent developments of the two empires. If the British holders of sea-to-sea charters had traded climates with those followers of Champlain who peopled Canada's "quelques arpents de neige," other sequences might have ensued in the development of zones of friction. Secondly, if the Spaniards and French had been driven overseas by religious persecution complexes, such as drove forth the British, both Puritan and Catholic, the social dynamic would have been modified by some tangible variation in the population pressure which was of itself a potent cause of that administrative neglect whereby British imperialism on the frontier gained ascendancy over its national rivals.

This is not to criticize Professor Gipson's treatment, but rather his conventional point of view. When we pass into his study of the Cherokee country, comprising some 35,000,000 acres on the upper Savannah and Tennessee Rivers, we find a vivid freshness in his treatment of groups of men working out their destiny without great attention to imperial policy or sense of obligation to posterity. The essential rivalry was between South Carolinian, Virginian, and Georgian traders over the supply of European goods to be exchanged for the chief native resource, buckskin leather. There was also much intrigue between the three colonies to keep the Creeks from fighting the Cherokees and to prevent the former from making too close relations with the French. All this is handled with an infinity of detail sometimes difficult to follow for one not familiar with the ground. A few black and white maps constructed to illustrate the text and not drawn from historical sources would have made numerous confusing passages more easily understandable. A feature of particular value is the detailed account of the individuals who brought about, sometimes unconsciously, the net results of imperial design.

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Four Eastern Cruises

A YACHTMAN'S COAST PILOT. By H. S. ("Skipper") Smith. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1940. 212 *pp.* $4.50.

Reviewed by HARRISON SMITH

THIS is an almost invaluable book for any yachtsman to add to the collection of sea-going books on the shelf at the head of his bunk. It should have been bound in oil-cloth, for it is as useful on deck as it is pleasant to read by the light of the cabin lamp. The author takes the amateur yachtsman firmly by the hand, and after lecturing him mildly in his Introduction, leads him by innumerable buoys, shoals, and lighthouses into some of the most enchanting and sheltered harbors any sailor of small craft could wish to enter. But this is a practical volume, and it leaves the trials and pleasures of cruising to other books that record the peculiarities of amateur crews, the behavior of the lady with claustrophobia, enclosed in what can only appear to her to be a malodorous coffin, or the struggles with galley stove and engine.

"Skipper" Smith's book takes up in detail four cruises, starting at Execution Rocks light at the New York end of Long Island Sound and leading you in turn to Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket; to Portsmouth, New Hampshire; to Northeast Harbor, Maine, and to Chesapeake Bay.

With the first three cruises this critic is familiar, since he has for years in vacation time rounded most of the headlands, and has dragged his anchor in too many of the harbors, so admirably described and charted. The cruise to the Chesapeake is terra-incognita to most of the hundreds of yachtsmen who start gaily off down the Sound every year, bound East, but it should induce many to go South of New York for a change.

The large scale reproductions of harbors are most useful, since most small yachts get along with the all inclusive government charts that are apt to lead to difficulties in entering or anchoring in small or shallow places when the tides or winds play strange tricks in the night. The directions as to where to find gasoline, stores and yacht yards will be of great service. The author shows an almost scandalous familiarity with buoys, cans, and nuns. Where else could you find out, for example, that three black cans and a nun in Quisset harbor are so battered and paintless that only by their shape can you tell them? But that little note may serve to keep someone off a sand-flat. The book closes with an appendix by which you can turn compass points into degrees, discover the velocity of a tidal current, and correct your course to suit.

In fact this is a handsome and an extremely useful book, and if you have never sailed, but are thinking of trying this finest of sports next year, you had better get it from your bookstore and look it over in the winter evenings that are not so many months away.

Harrison Smith's Cossack II

Harrison Smith, also known as "Skipper," is a publisher whose hobby, as the book trade knows, is ships and sailing.

The Andersons

LARZ ANDERSON. LETTERS AND JOURNALS OF A DIPLOMAT. Edited by Isabel Anderson. New York: Fleming H. Revell Company. 1940. 672 *pp., and index.* $5.

Reviewed by CHARLES DAVID ABBOTT

THIS book is as spacious as the lives it chronicles. Nearly seven hundred pages of excerpts from letters and autobiographic journals display the careers diplomatic, domestic, and, above all, social, not only of Larz Anderson, one time United States Minister of Belgium and Ambassador to Japan, but also of Isabel Perkins Anderson who, with conjugal piety, has herself arranged the selections in readable order and skillfully bridged the gaps where documents were unavailable. The result is more than a memorial to her husband. It is a kaleidoscopic, almost encyclopedic, survey of the American "upper crust" from 1888 to 1937. With unassuming naturalness it records all the minutiae of a way of life that was flawless in its conventional elegance, generous in its benefactions, extensive in its personal relationships, but somehow very remote from the actuality of the world.

It presents a continuous pageant of brilliant functions: formal dinner parties in Boston and Washington, where the Andersons kept houses; the Cup Races at Newport and the Harvard-Yale Races at New London; Exeter and Harvard reunions; receptions and balls of the "haute monde" in London, Paris, Rome, Brussels, and Tokyo. It describes travels that carried the Andersons into every quarter of the globe, including the United States, which they watched always either from their beloved houseboat *Roxana* or from a private car chartered from the railroad for each journey. They saw everything of interest, they knew everybody who mattered, they ran three model domestic establishments where they entertained frequently and munificently, and of all their activities they kept the meticulous records out of which this book is made.

Larz Anderson started young in the diplomatic service. Fresh out of Harvard he was attached for three years to the Embassy in London, where he earned a reputation both for dependability and popularity. Transferred to Rome in 1894, he rose to the rank of First Secretary. There he met Isabel Perkins and with the announcement of his engagement to her he resigned his post to devote himself to the life they were to live together. Then began the round of travels and social responsibilities which were only slightly augmented when fourteen years later his old family friend President Taft appointed him Minister to Belgium and, the year after, Ambassador to Japan. He was not disappointed when President Coolidge did not, as he half-expected, nominate him to the Embassy at Rome. "It would have been a great sacrifice for me to take up such duties, and when Fletcher was chosen, I found myself very considerably relieved."

He was wedded to the course of life he had chosen. He lived it seriously and devotedly even when difficulties and discrepancies could no longer go unnoticed. It was not that his mode of living changed, but that the world changed. Chaos threatened. Political and social transmutations were obvious in Boston, and in Washington such a regime as that of Herbert Hoover marked a decline that was abysmal. As for Chicago, its Century of Progress (?) Exposition, with the stark ugliness of its architecture, was a portent of the unspeakable.

> But the interesting thing to me was the people! I have never seen such terrible people, who fitted perfectly into the monstrous setting. Both place and people represented the tendency and taste of today, and the whole panorama was terrifying —a mass of human beings, the men in shirt sleeves, milling about. The sight of a lady or gentleman was rarer than any of the scientific exhibits. The crowd behaved well enough but gave the idea that a spark might cause a revolutionary explosion.

The America of his past had perished.

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THE NEW BOOKS

Belles Lettres

BAKER STREET AND BEYOND. By Edgar W. Smith. New York: Pamphlet House. 1940. 53 *pp. Illustrated with maps drawn by Julian Wolff, M.D.*

This work of scholarship will delight all true Holmesians. As a fox-hunter traces famous runs on the map, we can thumb these pages and recall the many unlikely places where the game, Watson, was afoot! Professor Smith has listed all the places mentioned in the Sherlockian Saga, with a note showing how each comes into the canon. His industry has listed not only the places visited by the actors, such as "Illinois: One of the United States, whose divine origin was attested by little Lucy Ferrier, in 'A Study in Scarlet' "; he has also mentioned, for instance, Attica, because Jabez Wilson gained considerable information about it out of the Encyclopedia Britannica, and has even included Eglow and Eglonitz, which appeared in Holmes's gazetteer (in "A Scandal in Bohemia") but in no other except this one. The present volume is further embellished with maps of various parts of the world, showing their Holmesian associations; there is a particularly fine one of the United States, showing the wanderings of the Latter-Day Saints, and also a detailed map of Vermissa Valley (the Valley of Fear) which lies somewhere along the New York-Pennsylvania border. All in all, this is a valuable contribution to the rapidly growing corpus of Holmesian scholarship, which should procure its author an honorary degree from the University of Camford (which was, you remember, "the composite university where Professor Presbury taught physiology by day and practised pithecology by night").

B. D.

Fiction

WEEVIL IN THE COTTON. By Samuel Milton Elam. Stokes. 1940. 231 *pp.* $2.

This is another it-*can*-happen-here book. A star political reporter in a small Southern city plays ball with a handful of venal politicians to start a Negro riot scare. In putting the faked riot down—there is no opposition paper to expose the plot—the politicians assume dictatorial power, organize a band of ruffians to terrorize the Negroes in true Nazi fashion, liquidate some of their enemies, and place others behind barbed wire. One of the politicians becomes "Guardian," instead of Fuehrer, and, seeing the Treasury almost empty, sets about to "protect" an adjoining community and incorporate it under his jurisdiction. The Treasury is thereby filled, but not the appetites of the fattened bosses. Their eyes soon turn toward the State capitol, which they prepare to capture. The newspaper plays its tune well, keeping all respectable citizens frightened. Successive murders and atrocities, however, accumulate too rapidly for the good of the "Guardian." "Weevil in the Cotton" is a racy, shocking novel of no great literary merit; at times it is too blatant and the borrowings from the Nazis too obvious. Nevertheless, it contains too much truth for comfort. The author knows well the bawdy politicians and newspapermen who are democracy's worst enemies.

C. K.

THE DELAMER CURSE. By Anne Green. Harpers. 1940.

Like all Anne Green's books, this is a mixture of absurdity and reality. If you like that combination, a touch of inconsecutiveness and even lunacy will not disturb you. You will bear with ladies who give away their ruby rings on an impulse, and fling their flowers out of the drawing room windows. You will not balk at crystal balls and a touch of voodoo. If you don't like that combination, you won't get beyond chapter two, anyway.

"The Delamer Curse" has lost the gayety of Miss Green's first works like "The Selbys." Here the author is interested in sinister forms of magic. There is a definite fairy-tale side to the book,—the old family curse, and a beautiful heroine who escapes from it after amazing adventures. Yet it is set against a background of modern Paris, and we take a fling into cosmopolitan society with our heroine. There is a curious dream-like quality about it all; it is a modern "Mysteries of Udolpho."

Isabelle Hart, like Cinderella, starts out as a drab, quiet little mouse, and like Cinderella, she changes rapidly. At twenty-two, she is living quietly in Paris with her father, an absent-minded professor. She revolts and demands life, love, and gayety. In so doing, she discovers (a) that she is rich and owns the fine eighteenth century house in which they live and (b) that she has inherited the family curse from her mother, the beautiful Miss Delamer. The Delamer curse manifests itself in various unpleasing ways. The Delamers never live beyond thirty and they have feelings of terror and foreboding. To distract herself, Isabelle gets a position as secretary to a fashionable faith healer, Mrs. Ripplestein. She becomes part of the smart Paris world, some of whom are drawn from life. The curse becomes more involved. We have glimpses of ghostly Delamers . . . crystal balls . . . hidden gardens . . . magic mirrors . . . an African necklace, embedded spell and all in an ornate coffee pot. A sensible husband rescues Isabelle from this nightmare, and most of the mysteries are explained.

There is a sharp change of mood in the book that startles the reader. We jump from farce to magic to melodrama without warning as one does in a dream. It is a diverting, confusing, episodic, modern fairy tale.

R. C. B.

A CASTLE IN CARINTHIA. By Johann Fabricius. Random House. 1940. 489 *pp.* $2.75.

This is the story of an unpretentious family of country gentry and their rural neighbors and tenants, a family who know royalty only from the newspapers and from one glimpse of the grey figure of the emperor at a military review, and who afford themselves only one brief trip to Vienna in the more than thirty years through which their doings are chronicled. Baron von Weygand, head of the family, is a retired major of Uhlans, happiest when he is riding over the fields from which he derives his modest income, and not above lending a hand with the hay fork at harvest time, his "castle" is no more than a decaying manor house, and his two daughters, about whom the story mostly revolves, are unsophisticated enough when they are nearly out of their teens to be awed by their first sight of a stationary bathtub with running hot and cold water.

In other words the Weygands are

"Like figures in a ballad," says the *Times*, of the characters in

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typical Austrian country gentry, living their outwardly dull lives by the uncomplicated code of their fathers much like members of the same class in Germany, England, Poland, and France at the end of the last century, decent, likable, somewhat stiff provincials, placidly unconscious of their anachronism in a world that has moved beyond them and is sweeping towards a catastrophe in which they will be overwhelmed. Or will they? A Weygand son is killed in the war, a daughter and another son are swept off into the rootless post war generation, inflation and political change threaten their ancient way of life, but there is a tough vitality about the Weygands and their code.

Johann Fabricius is a Dutch novelist, and though this novel is about Austria, there is a Dutch quality about it, an exactness and craftsmanship in the rendering of surfaces, an honest realism in the portrayal of character, an essential soundness and sober delight in soundness, which is perfectly appropriate to the subject, and reminds one of a good Vermeer. The farm, the forest, the manor, the family itself, their doctor, their servants, their tenants are all so solidly realized that it is impossible not to believe in them. The result is a book which for all its calmness and restraint is genuinely moving and exciting.

G. M.

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BARGAIN BOOK CO.
25 W. 45th St., New York, N. Y.

SMALL POTATOES. By Emily Muir. Scribners. 1940. 263 *pp.* $2.50.

The potatoes are undeniably small, and somewhat lacking in flavor; it can only be that in the last few years the Maine coast has from a literary point of view been worked almost to exhaustion. This time we see the Penobscot Bay region through the summer's activities of a young boy, Nate, who goes lobstering, haying, and so on, with his elders, swimming with his contemporaries, and camping with a handsome young Finn; and he asks questions and listens to the yarns of his mother and his uncles. The food and the scenery and the speech are all set down with sufficient accuracy, but they have no longer any novelty, and they have not the vividness or individuality which could alone make up for their familiarity to us. In the camping scene, perhaps, we get some feeling of a boy's sense of wonder, but throughout most of the book one feels that Mrs. Muir is too consciously naive in her portrayal of a country boy; surely, nowadays, even in the New England country, boys are not shocked when their companions say "Darn." Nate's uncles, too, who talk so much of the book, are sufficiently typical, but they are not sufficiently individual. Their speech has the leisurely quality of Maine country folk, but none of their occasional incisiveness. Their talk wanders on, giving more attention to the new calf than to the news from Europe, and dwelling on almost pointless anecdotes, like the time Loneybelle's tame coon stepped in the pie and she served it anyway. That is the sort of thing which is remembered and repeated in the country, where topics are scarce; but it does not help to carry the book for readers who did not know Loneybelle. Congreve once said, "I believe the talk of the wittiest men in the town, strictly set down, would hardly please upon the stage"; and it must be regretfully confessed that the talk of farmers, no matter how strictly set down, will hardly please either. Potatoes so small need talk with more salt.

B. D.

Travel

LAND WITHOUT LAUGHTER. By Ahmad Kamal. Scribners. 1940. 346 *pp.* $3.

The land of Tataristan, better known as Sinkiang, was not without laughter. It was full of it, laughter that was obscene or cruel or mad, and it pursued Ahmad Kamal like the ravens which tore the living flesh from his horse. It was a grim reception for the Muslim youth, born in America, who visited his ancestor's home. He came by the most perilous pass in the Himalayas, 18,000 feet high, in the midst of winter, staggering and starving through jungles of ice, sleeping among skeletons, until he reached at Khotan the rebel Tungan forces of Ma Hsi Jung. He was made an officer of that savage army which was struggling to throw off Soviet rule, for he had split open heads with the best of them and proved his mettle on the awful desert of Taklaman. When he was finally commissioned to purchase planes for Ma Hsi Jung he set out alone for Kashgar and the Gobi, the only possible route to Shanghai.

But the Soviets were awaiting him, and at Aksu and Urumchi he spent four months in prison, as grisly an experience as we have read of in a very long time. There are no heroics in his account of it; it is the true, emotional document of a man's mind breaking as his body was broken in the chains, of his stupid fasting, of his groundless hatred of the friend confined with him who would later be killed because of that friendship alone. Eventually he escaped, what was left of him, and returned to America, homesick already for Tataristan.

In this short compass a reviewer cannot hope to convey the mixed qualities of beauty and horror in the book, and it has indeed a bleak beauty sensitively delineated across his adventures in anguish. He writes with authority of his own strange people, and portrays excellently such odd characters as Ali, bellicose, lecherous and full of proverbs, or the tottering cell-mate who drew his dreams upon the wall. These Tatars, his kin, are known by name only to most of the world, yet they number indomitable millions and must one day, they believe, come into the heritage promised by Genghis Khan, when a similar leader shall arise and conquer the outer world which will soon be exhausted by war. That is the preposterous Tatar spirit which infuses the book, and it makes for rousing reading.

H. D.

WINGS OVER THE AMERICAS. By Alice Rogers Hager. Macmillan. 1940. 162 *pp.* $2.50.

The historian of the future, summarizing the culture of our times, may well note that as knowledge of the world became increasingly available to all so it grew increasingly superficial. A century ago, Mrs. Hager could not have made her grand tour of South and Central America in less than years of arduous travel, but she would have returned from such an adventure as an authority on the land and its peoples. Today she completes the same circuit in a few days, thanks to airplanes that fly two hundred miles per hour at elevations of fifteen or twenty thousand feet; but the sum of her experience is merely to have had fleetingly unrolled beneath her gaze the master map of the American continent. She has been granted a glimpse, but no insight.

Evidently appreciating the thinness of her material, Mrs. Hager has deliberately made this book less an account of Latin America, *per se*, than the story of flying south of the Rio Grande—with a chapter on Atlantic and subarctic flying appended. For

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this she has drawn on her own experience of following the airlines from Miami down the west coast, across the Andes, and up the east coast to Miami again, and on such information as she picked up in casual conversations along the way. Her book, which gives the impression of having been written as hastily as its material was gathered, reveals in frequent snatches of anecdote something of the heroism and ingenuity that, in less than a generation, has covered the Americas with wings—something, too, of the political and economic consequences. But she has had to lean so heavily on mere hearsay, the stuff of fables, for her information that her book cannot be set down as anything more than a slight and slap-dash account of air-travel in the Western Hemisphere. L. J. H., Jr.

DOWN JERSEY. By Cornelius Weygandt. Appleton-Century. 1940. 352 *pp., with index.* $5.

This book wanders in leisurely fashion, as its author did, through the small towns, the heaths and dunes and tomato-growing country of South Jersey. Here it stops for a while to talk to the conservative country folk, with their contempt for the summer people who have spoiled their coast, and their English Quaker background. Here it spends four pages describing an ancient carved Finnish sea-chest, and another three dwelling on the glories of "Taylor Hams" or "Fortescue Fries"—those oysters covered with a batter of flour and oyster juice and fried in shallow butter, peculiar to South Jersey. It romanticizes on the wild cattle of the beaches, and the amber streams of cedar water.

When you start the book you are still adjusted to the rapid pace of modern cities, and you look with distaste and impatience at the 350-odd pages of slow, thoughtful, disconnected wanderings which you must follow. But then you get to page 33, where there is a charming story of an old maiden lady who lived contentedly alone in the country until she found that she was sharing her house with a huge rat. When you get to this episode, as we said, you find yourself becoming attuned to a new and quieter philosophy—an outlook which is still possessed by many of these country folk.

The book is steeped in this philosophy, the spirit of a narrower, more leisurely period of American history, when farming and fishing were all-important, when glass-blowing was a real art, and fishermen were more interested in the fate of their eel-baskets in the last nor'wester than in the radio news. It is a real achievement, that Mr. Weygandt has succeeded not only in recapturing the spirit of this countryside, but can even lure his readers into it, almost against their wills. You don't have to be a Jerseyite to enjoy "Down Jersey," but you begin to feel like one by the time you have finished it. K. S.

Double-Crostics: No. 336

By ELIZABETH S. KINGSLEY

1-E	2-W	3-J		4-W	5-L		6-F	7-G		8-L		9-J	10-Q	11-S	12-X	13-O
14-I	15-C		16-P	17-X	18-N	19-D	20-Q	21-H	22-J		23-B	24-U	25-A	26-D	27-G	
28-B	29-C		30-I	31-R	32-Q	33-F	34-U	35-J	36-X	37-P		38-C	39-B	40-M		41-U
42-S	43-G	44-A		45-N	46-S	47-M		48-K	49-O	50-U	51-H		52-B	53-S	54-A	55-M
56-C		57-Q	58-K	59-R	60-S	61-D	62-O	63-U	64-B	65-H	66-R		67-G	68-B	69-F	70-E
	71-W	72-E	73-K	74-J		75-D	76-C	77-Q	78-K		79-T	80-V	81-C		82-W	83-V
84-M		85-L	86-W	87-I	88-B		89-V	90-T		91-K	92-B	93-A		94-P	95-Q	96-R
97-E	98-D		99-G		100-A	101-O	102-R	103-I	104-U	105-D		106-E	107-R	108-B	109-O	
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123-S	124-K	125-J	126-P	127-F	128-T		129-T	130-J	131-D	132-Q		133-S	134-A		135-R	136-N
137-E	138-K	139-F		140-M	141-L	142-K		143-J	144-P	145-D		146-D	147-R	148-J	149-N	150-O
151-G		152-E	153-W	154-Q	155-L	156-V		157-G	158-R	159-C	160-V		161-G	162-E	163-I	
164-G	165-N	166-L		167-M	168-P	169-B	170-F	171-S		172-K	173-T	174-P	175-J	176-A	177-H	

DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle you must guess twenty-four words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. The key letters in the squares are for convenience, indicating to which word in the definitions each letter in the diagram belongs. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square on the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Reading up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; therefore words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Authority for spelling and definitions is Webster's New International Dictionary (1938 edition).

The solution of last week's *Double Crostic* will be found on page 18 of this issue.

DEFINITIONS

A. Easily pulverized.

B. Horsemanship.

C. Not subdued.

D. English poet (1752-70).

E. Incomplete deceptive statement (comp.)

F. Bach, Beethoven, Brahms (2 wds.)

G. American elk.

H. Character in "Richard III."

I. Was momentarily inattentive.

J. English novelist (1867-1933).

K. Encourages.

L. With 3 horses to a vehicle, one behind the other.

M. House sparrow (comp.)

N. First name of English religious writer (woman) (1745-1833).

O. Incipient.

P. Roman poet (ca. 60-130 A.D.)

Q. Confront.

R. Merry-go-round.

S. Too close-fitting for comfort.

T. Character in "Twelfth Night."

U. Arch tricks.

V. Relation of husband to wife in monogamous country (comp.)

W. Willful disfiguring of the body.

X. Covet.

WORDS

134 44 25 54 100 176 93

88 23 39 68 28 52 169 64 108 92

76 56 38 29 15 159 81

26 75 146 61 98 105 131 116 19 145

70 72 1 106 137 115 162 152 97

69 111 139 170 127 6 33

67 99 157 164 151 27 7 43 161 121

21 51 65 177

163 14 30 103 113 87

175 125 35 143 148 130 9 3 22 74

124 172 48 91 58 142 138 73 78

155 8 141 166 5 85

110 167 55 84 40 47 140 120

18 149 45 165 136 117

62 109 13 101 150 49

16 144 126 37 174 168 94

77 132 20 95 32 10 57 154

135 158 31 107 147 59 96 102 66

133 42 46 171 60 11 53 123 118

90 79 129 173 114 128

50 34 104 24 41 63 112

89 80 156 119 160 83

4 86 82 153 2 71

17 12 86 122

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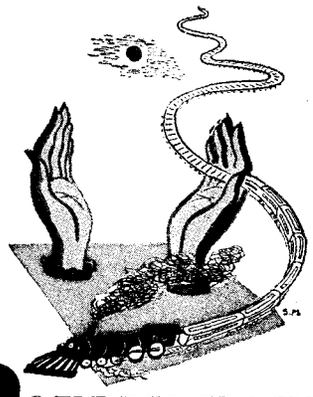

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TRADE WINDS

P. E. G. QUERCUS

OLD QUERCUS liked V. W. Brooks's remark (in *New England: Ind an Summer*) about the Yale recluse "who lived all his life in New Haven, invisible as a treetoad in an oak." ☞His name was right for that; John De Forest. ☞Old Q. himself has had many of the pleasures of being unnoticed; for instance his remark that Thoreau's temperament was the best example in New England of autumn coming early. ☞It is characteristic of the authors of our own generation that they fall suddenly into caducity, showing little or no autumn season.

★ ★

☞We are pleased to see the appearance of *Maryland* in the American Guide Series (Oxford Press, $2.75), compiled by W.P.A. scriveners. This looks, at casual but enjoyable glance, like an intelligent (and beautifully illustrated) study of the most unspoiled of our commonwealths. Maryland has perhaps more State Appeal than any other. As was said by one of our colleagues, "She has always kept her beauties private for those who love her. Not for her the push and publicity of Vermont." This book should be reviewed at large by an expert, such as Mr. Hulbert Footner, whose biography of Commodore Barney—Baltimore's forgotten son—is soon to come from Harpers. ☞In the early onset of autumn our Adirondack poet Balsam Pilloes always revives. This year he sends us:—

Ballad of Chevvy Chase

I had a dear old Chevvy
The sweetest ever seen,
And every crossing she came to
The traffic light turned green.

Her radiator's leaky,
She has a jumping clutch;
I sold her once for thirty bucks
And thought it was too much.

Oh, good old open chariot,
She taught four kids to drive—
I bought her back, Iscariot,
By paying Seventy Five.

★ ★

☞Automobiles provide a good parable of modern civilization. At the same time that they were constantly increasing speed and power, the designers managed to reduce visibility—both forward and arrear—so that the driver could see less and less of where he was going. ☞The best reading we've had lately is in five bound volumes of the old weekly *Puck*, in the years 1889-94, which we bought from Arthur H. Clark Co., Glendale, Calif., and found they came from the famous library of the Oxford Union Society. We were specially entertained by the savage rivalry between N. Y. and Chicago as to which should have the 1893 World's Fair. *Puck* said in 1889, "We can form some vague conception of the superlative bad taste, the crudity, the narrowness and general futility of the Chicago idea of such an affair."

★ ★

☞Enthusiasts of railroadiana can list for this autumn's reading *The Railroad in Literature,* a roundhouse of romance on rails by Frank P. Donovan, Jr. It is published by the Railway and Locomotive Historical Society (whose address is c/o Baker Library, Harvard Business School) at $3. ☞The Business Office of the *S.R.L.,* feeling a touch of gallup in its blood, sent round a poll among a slice of subscribers asking if they read mystery stories. Prorating the replies to total circulation, the result seems to show that 14,156 do and 15,853 do not. What conclusions are drawable from this, no one knows; but it was good for the U.S.P.O.

★ ★

☞Iola Doncyson writes from Montebello, Calif., that in four years reading this review she has noticed Old Q. four times despondently mentioning that *The Shadow Line* (Joseph Conrad) is not enough read. This finally got to her, she read the book and so enjoyed it that she used one of its great scenes as symbol for a woodcut bookplate; which is one of the few really imaginative bookplates we have seen in years. But you would need to read the book to understand it. ☞On Second Avenue we found for 5 cents a copy of *The Breadwinners* an almost forgotten novel (by John Hay, 1883; but this copy, dated 1905, was still issuing anonymously). ☞And at Alfred Goldsmith's famous shop on Lexington Avenue, which we hadn't visited in too long, we bought Gissing, Matthew Arnold and Mary Webb, insisting on clergyman's discount. No one can say that Old Q. doesn't give his all for letters. ☞A press sheet from Macmillan reports that a book called *The Youth of New York City,* by Nettie McGill and Ellen Mathews (researchers of the Welfare Council) says there are about a million young people from 16 to 25 in N. Y. City. Of these, about 490,000 are Roman Catholics, 310,000 Jews, and 180,000 Protestants. And that, in the year 1935, about half of these million "had not gone to a dance during the preceding year, or taken a walk for pleasure, or had an automobile ride." ☞It is dangerous to be too flatfooted in statements of this kind, but even allowing for much leeway in the digits, this doesn't sound like Kraft durch Freude.

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